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REFLECTIONS

ON THE

P R E S E N T *S T A T E*

OF THE

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BRITISH N A T I O N,

BY

BRITISH

COMMON SENSE.

And uncommence *Looking*

Nolint,—atqui licet, esse beatis.

HOR. SAT. I.

L O N D O N:

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M. DCC. XCI.

REFLECTIONS

OF THE

PRESENT STATE

OF THE

BRITISH NATION



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M. DCC. LXXI.

REFLECTIONS,

&c.

IN this country, where corruption has so completely subdued and strongly fettered human reason, the attempt of one or more obscure individuals to again erect the standard of forlorn reason, and take the field against her seemingly irresistible vanquisher, may appear desperate presumption, bordering upon insanity.

But I, for one, esteem it base and dastardly to despair of the commonweal. Indeed, why should I or others despair!—Since the world began, nay, almost in our own day, we have beheld human reason in a situation still more forlorn; more completely subdued, bound in stronger fetters, by an enemy of still more mighty power. And we now see that once omnipotent, haughty, and cruel oppressor prostrate at the feet of reason; and that through the means of individuals, till then obscure.

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Who is there amongst you so ignorant or uninformed, that does not, at this day, look back with disdain and contempt, on that supine slothful credulity of men, which suffered a few religious jugglers, by means of gross trick and fiction, to fetter their reason, to insult and abuse their understanding, to rob them of their property, and to trample upon their privileges as men.

Yet, with the same supine slothful credulity, you now suffer a few state jugglers to fetter your reason, to insult and abuse your understanding, to rob you of your property, and to trample upon your privileges as men, in a degree far more oppressive and injurious to your interest, by means of tricks and fiction still more gross and worse disguised; and therefore in a manner less excusable and more disgraceful to you.

For these religious jugglers effected their deceptions by means of a celestial engine; the nature and properties of which were above the comprehension of human reason. The ignorant laity were humbly conscious that they knew nothing of what was going on in heaven; whereas the deluding clergy pretended to a perfect knowledge of those matters, through divine revelation, exclusively understood by them, the chosen ministers of heaven, acting under its express commission, specially delegated to them; and in particular to one of them, who was appointed by God his vicegerent

gerent in these matters on earth ; with farther power to open or shut the gates of heaven to whomsoever he pleased. It was therefore highly excusable in men, consciously ignorant, to superstitiously surrender the implicit guidance of their reason, in matters evidently above the reach of that reason, to those supposed unerring guides, and all powerful disposers of their future eternal interest.

But what excuse can you plead for having surrendered the exercise of your reason, and yielded up the guidance thereof, in a degree not less passively superstitious, to men who have not the shadow of claim to divine mission ; who can plead no right to authority or power over you, save what they derive from your own gift ; which they hold only by your own consent, and subject to your own controul : who can pretend to no supernatural or exclusive knowledge of the matters which they so mysteriously conceal from you ? These matters being your own temporal concerns, and of a nature so completely within the comprehension of human reason, that every one of you is, by nature, equally qualified to judge of and distinguish on them, as any one of these who assume the present mysterious management of them. By the rules of reason as well as of nature, every one of you has an equal right as they to judge on those concerns. And every one of you is now called upon by the very first law of nature, to exercise that right of

judging on those your own concerns; seeing that each of you has an equal risk, and consequently an equal interest in the stake; namely, your *all*: Be that *all* comparatively great, or comparatively little.

And let not any one of you believe, or suffer others to persuade you, that these truths are here mentioned for the purpose of opposing or impeding the due authority of government, to serve the purpose of party, or to stir up dissention. Reason is not the foe; she is the surest friend and most zealous supporter of good government and due subordination. She disdains party or cabal of every description; and she abhors dissention. For she attempts nothing by bodily force or compulsion. The mind is her subject, on the understanding, and not the passions of which, she works by soft persuasion and clear conviction, producing unanimity of sentiment amongst men, and a general concurrence of their will. To effect this she requires nothing more than a candid and attentive hearing. If men will vouchsafe the hearing to Reason, her power is irresistible. Folly, with her train of tyrants and slaves, immediately flies before her, and vanishes from the face of the earth; but, as her voice is still and gentle, and the voice of folly is loud, boisterous, and imperious, it is extremely difficult for Reason to obtain the hearing from men.

To obtain for reason this candid and attentive hearing from you, my fellow citizens, is the present purpose of an individual but little known; styling himself *Common Sense*; that constant and faithful attendant on Human Reason. He is perfectly aware of the seeming impossibility to shake the throne of folly; so strongly established on long habit and custom; supported by the whole wealth of an opulent nation, profusely lavished on the purposes of general corruption; and watchfully guarded by an innumerable host of seduced and deluded mercenaries. But he founds his hopes, and strong hopes of success, on the fitness of *Time*, or *Occasion*, which is said to be the most powerful, as well as the wisest counsellor of all.

It had long been, and ever was till of very late, the confirmed opinion of all men, in the least acquainted with your national concerns, that a continuation of the same management must, in a short space of time, produce national insolvency. And your language then was, “ *We hope it will last our time.*” A mean spirited and dastardly trust, yet it was your only trust.

But astonishing as it now doth appear to Common Sense, and incredible as it would, but for woeful feeling, appear to posterity, such has been the late influence of corruption on your understanding, that, without any change in your situation for the better, but on the contrary, much for the worse, your present

sent language is, "*We are very well as we are, we do not wish to be better.*" And your conduct corresponds with your language. Revelling in profound security, in mirth and in jollity; acting precisely the thoughtless spendthrift bankrupt, who exceeds his former degree of extravagance and expensive debauch, at the time when his commission is about issuing.

Could you possibly exhibit more striking instances to this effect, than in your late wanton armament, and your present Indian war? And which are here termed your acts, because by your concurrence therein you have rendered yourselves accessories after the fact; and thereby become disqualified for ever after to sit as judges on those, or indeed on any other act of your government wherein you shall so concur; be it ever so pernicious to your interest.

At any rate, crimination of your government for past misdeeds, irritation, or dissention, is far from being the object of this present address. Prevention of future evils is its only aim.

Instead of discord or sedition, it is hereby proposed to promote universal concord; an unanimous concurrence of this whole community in adopting that measure, which alone can prevent the most dreadful and fatal of all seditions; even the desperate rage and resentment of a whole people against their government, upon discovering
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that they have been abused, deceived, and ruined : and which must unavoidably and speedily prove the case, unless the measure herein after pointed out shall be adopted.

For the moment it shall be discovered that the national resources fall short of answering the present enormous yearly expenditure, that moment popular delusion vanishes, and desperate rage succeeds in its place ; and it is not in the power of despotism itself, with all its cunning contrivances, to long procrastinate that day of dreadful reckoning.

For, besides the wasteful profusion and abuse of your government, causes altogether sufficient to this effect in themselves, there has lately arisen another cause, which will greatly accelerate that said dreadful event ; and which, as being a foreign cause, beyond the reach or influence of your government, will force it, as well as you, to *feel*, in defiance of corruption, deception, slothful credulity, or national infatuation.

The cause here alluded to, is the late reform of the wasteful profusion and oppressive abuses of their government in France. A country so situated, with respect to yours, in a variety of circumstances, besides that of contiguity, that no alteration whatever, for the better or worse, can happen in the one, that will not in a great degree affect the situation of the other country.

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It shall hereafter be set forth at large, in what manner and to what degree, the present reform of government abuses in France, when it shall come to operate on the manufactures and commerce of that country, will affect the present flattering state of your manufactures and commerce; which is the principal source from whence you derive the means to support your present enormous expenditure.

In this introductory part it shall suffice to observe, that so soon as the manufactures and commerce of France shall come to feel the alleviation of one half part of their former taxes; and when they shall farther feel the benign and active influence of a mild, just, and attentive government, instead of the haughty oppression, and contemptuous discouragement of their late despotic government, and both which alterations they will strongly feel in a very little space of time; then, and at that time, will the manufactures and commerce of Britain woefully feel the ruinous pressure of their present burdens, in case the same shall be continued.

First, and at all events, and that very speedily, in a total deprivation of the French market for these manufactures, which Britain has enjoyed for some years past, almost entire; particularly through the late confusions in France. And the loss of that market will be felt here severely.

Second,

Second, in a loss of the market for these manufactures in other foreign countries; from which, under such a great difference of circumstances, Britain will soon be cut off by France.

And finally, in the loss of our own market, or home consumption; as France has lately experienced.

And suffer not yourselves to be lulled into ruinous security, by the mean unmanly expectation, that this late necessary reform of government abuses in France; this first rational and effectual effort of a people, to vindicate the dignity of human nature, to rescue men from that ignominious state of abject slavery, and cruel oppression, under which they have been ever held, by the unnatural force of feudal tyranny, will or can be defeated, or even retarded. These expectations are not more mean and unmanly than they are false and groundless; suggested and inculcated upon you, by pernicious parasitical sophisters, and other retainers to or dependents upon tyranny and corruption; whose base minds being totally void of that generous spirit, that principle, and sentiment, which first animated the people in France to undertake this glorious enterprize, they cannot conceive or believe that such a spirit exists in human nature. And thereupon, they persuade themselves, and endeavour to persuade you, that this undertaking of

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the French people differs nothing from the rash ebullition of an English mob, suddenly excited, and as suddenly quelled. And, in this persuasion, they daily labour to impose upon your credulity forged facts, and vain predictions of counter revolutions; which exist only in their own wicked hearts, and crazed imaginations.

To enlarge on this subject here would interfere with our intended purpose. Thus much however it is necessary to add, that the lapse of two years has furnished the proof of *actual* facts, in contradiction to these *forged* facts and vain predictions, sufficing to convince all of you, the credulous as well as the incredulous, that the same spirit, which first animated the people of France to this glorious undertaking, still animates them, with a zeal increased by increase of rational knowledge, to prosecute that undertaking to a complete, perfect, and a firm perpetual establishment. And farther, that they do so prosecute it with profound wisdom, and great skill, daily improving by experience; and at the same time with astonishing temper, moderation, and magnanimity.

And, from these premises, you may assuredly conclude, that it is altogether beyond your power, (even if you were so basely disposed;) that it is infinitely beyond the power of those few desperate and despicable retainers to despotism in that country; that it is beyond the power of all the surrounding

rounding despots, with their mercenary bands, united ; nay, that it is beyond the power of all these, combined, to shake the strong basis, or even to retard the complete and firm establishment of that rationally modelled government in France ; supported, as it is, by the souls as well as the bodies of twenty millions of people, enlightened and guided by pure human reason.

And, from the same premises, you may draw this farther assured conclusion, that so soon as the wise and just regulations, which have been framed by their present government, shall be carried into full execution and practice, and which is now nearly the case, they will infallibly produce all those effects on the commerce and manufactures of France, operating in the manner that hath been mentioned, a subversion of your manufactures and commerce.

But it is altogether in your power to prevent this subversion of your manufactures and commerce, by means that are perfectly honourable, and easily practicable. Relieve them from the burden and effects of all such taxes as are unnecessary, and from those wanton abuses of power, by which they are at present intolerably oppressed. This relief being granted in time, and before your manufactures and commerce shall come to feel the effects that have been mentioned, will place them, in other respects, nearly upon a footing with

those of France; and will even preserve to them the advantage they at present possess, in superiority of skill, and priority of establishment. But if you shall delay that relief, until oppression in the one country and encouragement in the other, shall have drawn your manufacturers, together with the skill in manufacture, from you, relief will then come too late. Manufacture and also commerce will then be departed from you.—And, once gone, they never will return.

And thus much it appeared necessary to premise, respecting the imminently dangerous situation of your manufactures and commerce; in order to thereby arouse your attention, and obtain from you a hearing for Reason, on the subject of your other national concerns; which, notwithstanding they are not so immediately affected by that said foreign cause, as are your manufactures and commerce, yet are they otherwise in a situation so truly dangerous, that unless an effectual remedy shall be speedily applied, this nation must soon be plunged into a state of misery, ruin, and despair.

And, if your national concerns are actually and truly in such an imminently dangerous situation, (and that they are in such a situation Common Sense undertakes to prove) and if there be within your reach and power the means to prevent this imminent ruin, (as Common Sense likewise undertakes

dertakes to prove,) shall not Reason prevail on you to apply those means?

To what end or use did he who made you with such large discourse, looking before and after, bestow upon you that capability, and Godlike Reason? Was it for the purpose of qualifying you, either aggregately or severally, to be more ingeniously and usefully subservient to the will and purposes of one or more beings of your own species, who hold no interest in common with you, or who at least have separated their share from the common stock? Or was not this Godlike faculty bestowed upon you, for the purpose of enabling you to distinguish between good and evil; to preserve yourselves from danger; and to promote your own welfare and true happiness, either as a community, or as individuals of that community?

And think not these questions impertinent or absurd!—Your conduct warrants them.—Nay, and if they were to be answered ingenuously, according to that conduct, the answer would be little for your credit.—What a falling off is here!—What a shameful defection from the standard of Godlike Reason, to that of the beastlike tyrant, Folly!—Yet it is not too late; the day of grace is not yet past; nor the door to salvation shut.—But little time is there to be lost.

Rouse then, my Fellow Citizens!—Rouse up your Reason from that disgraceful *deliquium*, into
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which it hath been thrown by base, accursed corruption—that lewd procurefs of the tyrant Folly; that fell hag and forcerefs; which, like the fabulous *Circe*, hath by her wicked charms and incantations transformed you into beasts, the passive drudges of her cruel employer!—Hearken to the voice of Godlike Reason; and immediately obey her call, to rescue and save yourselves, with your posterity, from impending ruin; by employing the means that alone can save you; by applying that remedy which alone can prevent your almost desperate disease from proceeding to an absolute mortification!

Nor is this remedy a mystery, confined within the knowledge or power of a select few—It is obvious to every eye, and readily within your own power.—Acquire that voice, that power, and share in your legislative government which, according to reason, nature, and the due order of things, inherently appertains to you, and which self-preservation now calls loudly upon you to exercise: by means of a real actual representation of yourselves; according to the only true, genuine, and natural sense, or signification of that thing, *Representation*; which is, that the persons, who are to represent you in your legislature, shall be chosen to that office by the free voices of all and every one of you who are to be represented; and by none other. And that these representatives, when
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so chosen and appointed, shall not possess the power or opportunity to convert the trust committed by you to them, into a personal right of their own; but shall execute that trust under the full controul of you their constituents, *and under no other controul or authority*; by means of a perpetual obligation to recur frequently to your judgement of their conduct, by fresh elections, at short fixed periods.

Such a representation of yourselves can alone save and secure you and your posterity from ruin; and such a representation will do that effectually. For, reform of every one abuse in your government, will flow as naturally from such a representation, as water flows from the full fountain. Whereas a fallacious, fictitious, or nominal representation never will reform one single evil or abuse; but, on the contrary, will only serve to countenance and abet the *actual* government, in perpetuating and aggravating every present evil and abuse.

But it hath been undertaken to first convince you that your national concerns are at present in such a situation, as to indispensably require the immediate application of this remedy.

And, to that end, it is proposed to place before your eyes a view of those concerns; principally respecting the present state of your Finances, and the manner in which they are administered. And
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also respecting the present state of your Police ; and the manner of administering your Municipal government.

And, in this intended view of your financial administration, you will perceive such an unjustifiable, profuse waste of national treasure, on those establishments that may be termed necessary to government ; and, what is worse, on establishments that shall appear to be not barely unnecessary, but highly pernicious to the commonweal. Nay, you will perceive the national wealth squandered in a manner so wantonly profuse, on purposes where even the personal ambition or avarice of government do not appear to be rationally concerned, as would induce the inspector to conclude, that the parties concerned in causing this waste did really consider national wealth, or affluence, to be the greatest human evil ; which it was their duty, or otherwise their interest, to prevent by all possible means, and to get rid of as soon as possible. And, when you shall perceive all the various sums that are yearly drawn from this community, for these several purposes, collected into one total sum, that total sum will be found so astonishingly enormous, as will convince the most inconsiderate, that the present wasteful expenditure of its government cannot be long supported by the resources of this State ; even if they were to remain in their present flourishing situation ; whereas, there

there is not a truth more certain, or more obvious than this, that these resources must speedily feel a mighty diminution.

And, in proof of these assertions, it is farther intended to point out how, and by what means, many millions of the present expenditure may be yearly saved to this community.

And, when you shall come to view the present state of your Police, and the administration of your municipal government, you will perceive that government administered in such a manner, as if they who are invested with the power of administering it, considered it their duty, or at least their interest, to promote purposes, directly opposite to those purposes for which they are vested by the community with such power.

You will perceive your whole labouring commonalty wilfully and intentionally debauched and seduced from industry. Not barely permitted but tempted and invited by the peculiar nature of that government, and the practice of those who administer it, to be idle, dissolute, extravagant, negligent of their families, disorderly, and disobedient to all rightful authority. You will perceive above one third part of that labouring commonalty existing in unspeakable misery; wallowing in filth, squalor, and beastly slavish ignorance; placed by the management of your government, in a state of absolute idleness, and total uselessness to this

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State ; nay converted, by the practice of that government, into an intolerable burden, an insufferable nuisance, and desperate destructive enemy to the honest, the peaceable, and industrious part of the community.

Whilst, on the other hand, you will perceive this peaceable and industrious part of the community loaded, by that government, with such a burden of taxes, yearly paid by them, for the express purpose of protecting and securing them from those very evils and abuses, as greatly exceeds the whole sums paid yearly, for the like purposes, by all the other communities on earth together.

And here likewise, in order to convince you that it is practicable to remedy and prevent all this, the special ways and means shall be pointed out, whereby that yearly waste of public treasure on these municipal purposes may be saved to the community; and, at the same time, these present evils and abuses be converted into future national benefits and advantages.

Here then, my fellow Citizens, doth Common Sense address himself at your tribunal, the unfee'd advocate of Human Reason ; to prove the truth of all the several charges he has here laid. And farther to prove that all the several enormities, evils, and abuses so charged, are within the power of
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of remedy. All that he desires, in return for his pains, is a fair and candid hearing from you.

And here again Common Sense disclaims all intention to criminate your present government for past misdeeds, to irritate, or to inflame. And this repeated protestation he makes, for the purpose of counteracting that artifice, which State jugglers have of late revived with such success, to prevent your granting the hearing to Reason, on the subject of your national concerns.

For, even as religious jugglers did formerly prevail on mankind to reject with horror every attempt to undeceive them in religious matters, by branding all such attempts with the general epithet of "*Schismatical opposition to Holy Church*"—"*Damnable Heresy*;" and, by that artifice, held the minds of men, for so many ages, in dark ignorance, and blind slavish superstition. Even so have State jugglers of late revived that very artifice, with equal success; by branding every attempt to undeceive you in your national matters, with the general appellation of "*Seditious Opposition to Government*."—Neither do they want their court of inquisition to secure that success.

*A View of the Municipal Government in
England.*

INTENDING to lay before you a view of your national concerns, principally respecting the present state of your Finances, and of your Police, there occurred a doubt, which of those two objects held the best claim to your first attention. But, for obvious reasons, it was judged proper to first consider the present state of your Police, or the administration of your municipal government; as it affects the morals, the conduct, and the state or situation of the several individuals, or classes of individuals composing this community; as well as that of the whole community at large.

And, for our present purpose, it will suffice to divide that community into only two classes. The first, to comprehend all those above the degree of servility. The second, to consist of the labouring commonalty.

On the morals, the conduct, and situation of that first class, a respectful silence shall here be observed. It is the second class that becomes the subject of our present observation.

And this second-class shall be again subdivided into two parts. The first, to comprehend all those
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of the commonalty who actually do labour, and maintain themselves and their families by industry. The second, to contain all those who, having no honest means of subsisting but by labour, yet do not labour, but are idle. Though, in fact, there is a middling sort betwixt these two; and a numerous sort they are, but all these shall be reckoned in with the first, or industrious part.

On that first, or actually labouring part of the commonalty, it shall here suffice to observe that, however disorderly, dissolute, insolent, and disobedient to due authority they may be, it is owing entirely to the natural goodness of their own disposition, or to the force of parental education, and not in the slightest degree to the attention or care of your government, that they are so good; or properly, that they are not much worse.

But, when we come to consider the case of that other part of our commonalty who, having no honest means to subsist but by their labour, are either through slothfulness, viciousness, or the want of opportunity, idle and unemployed, what a scene presents itself to our view!—A scene so truly horrid, so exceedingly degrading and disgraceful to human nature, and at the same time so totally repugnant to all the principles of good or just government, as never yet disgraced any other country, or any other age. And this, whether we consider the number and the situation of those wretched
poor,

poor, or whether we consider the relative situation of the other part of this community.

For, respecting the number of those idle or unemployed poor, if we shall take into the reckoning all those who exist in absolute idleness, by parish charity and vagrant beggary, by robbing and thieving, and by other vicious courses, we shall find that they exceed in number one third part of our whole labouring commonalty.

And, if we shall take the trouble to consider the situation of that part of those idle poor who subsist by parish charity and vagrant beggary, we shall find it to be, not only beneath the rank of human beings, but greatly beneath the rank of those beasts that are useful to men. For these wretches, being entirely useless to every one valuable purpose in nature, are not of the slightest account, consideration, or consequence, either to others, or to themselves. Excluded from the taste of every thing like rational independence, or free agency; and consequently excluded from every ray of comfort or satisfaction in life, they crawl about, like unheeded vermin, in the streets, and in the fields, in a state of inconceivable ignorance, profligacy, and lewdness. Or otherwise, immured within the precincts of a parish workhouse, they exist in beastly squalor and filth, in slavish miserable dependence on charity, extorted from those who wish the whole of them extinguished.

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And now let Common Sense call for your judgement, my fellow citizens, whether the above truly described situation is such as befits rational beings!

Yet the state of this begging part is far less deplorable, than is that of those others who subsist by robbing and thieving. This class of beings hath of late become amazingly numerous indeed. As consisting of the whole progeny of numberless vicious parents; who through the nature and practice of our government are permitted, indeed encouraged, to rear their entire offspring in their own wicked courses. And these are re-inforced by multitudes of others, better educated; who have been led or driven to that course of life, by perhaps some one single act of irregularity, committed through unavoidable temporary distress, or possibly through the inconsiderate levity of youth; to which the present annual state lotteries are no slight inducement. For having, by such single act of irregularity, incurred reproach or the loss of good character, they thereby become disqualified for and excluded from all private employ; because, in every situation of that nature, there exists a degree of trust or confidence. And, being thus cut off from all opportunity of earning a subsistence in private employ, there exists not at present any possible means whereby they can earn a subsistence through labour, or honest employ of any kind. Of course all these unhap-

happy beings become unavoidably reduced to this horrid alternative ; either to steal whereon to subsist life, or otherwise to starve. A death, of all deaths, the most repugnant to human feeling.— And therefore they put forth their hand, and steal.

The moment they have committed one single act of theft they are, from thenceforth, chained down for life to subsist by thieving ; and are irretrievably consigned to the gallows. They are for ever cut off from the paths of men, and are placed in the state of prowling wolves, to subsist by ravage and depredation ; living in perpetual horror, and hourly dread of detection. For, like wolves, a price is set upon their heads. And, when detected, they are hanged up like wolves ; or transported to the farthest corners of the earth. Otherwise they are inhumanly punished for years, in jails, and in Justitia gallies ; and, when let loose, are under the unavoidable necessity of again returning to steal, or starve. On which terms, liberty, or going at large, which to all other beings on earth is the most desirable of blessings, becomes to these human beings alone the most dreadful of all curses. And more especially if, after such confinement, there shall remain in them the slightest ray of rational reflection ; or one latent spark of human virtue.

And here again permit Common Sense to call for your judgement, whether it is fit, or becoming even uncivilized human nature, that such a num-

ber of your fellow citizens should be irremediably placed in this horrid situation. More particularly if you shall consider, that many of these may be youths of ingenuous disposition, of generous sentiment, of extensive natural abilities, and of liberal education. Who, if any possible means had been held forth of earning an honest subsistence, or if any the slightest regard were paid to these matters by your government, would have returned to the paths of honesty, would have become useful, perhaps an ornament to society. Is it fit, I say, that these, or any of these should be irretrievably placed in this horrid situation, which hath been here truly described; provided there are any possible means to prevent or remedy it? And that there are such means, not only effectual, but easily practicable, Common Sense hath undertaken to prove uncontestably.

But first we have to consider the relative situation of the orderly, honest, and industrious part of the community, as it stands affected by this conduct of their government. Through such total inattention of government, together with such accession of genius as hath been mentioned to the society of thieves, the practice of thieving hath, of late years, become elevated, in this country, to the dignity of a learned profession. They have their regular seminaries; where novices are instructed in the whole mystery of thieving, from the

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first elements, to the highest degree of professional skill. Where students undergo honorary probation, respecting their ingenuity and dexterity of practice; their craft and steadiness to evade or resist the inquisition of the law; and their intrepidity and firmness in dying hard. Where, in their dreadful orgies, they are sworn to desperate secrecy; and are steeled against the feelings of fear and compunction, by repeated exhibitions of the whole process of events to which the profession is subject;—from detection, to trial at the bar, to confinement in the cells, to the gallows, and finally to interment. But it was reserved for this country, and this present age, to produce those *nouvelle* monsters of human nature, the house-burners; who lay waste a whole neighbourhood, for the purpose of plundering the wretched inhabitants.

It is difficult to conceive, but altogether impossible to describe, the danger, the dread, and the loss to which the honest and industrious part of this community is subjected by the existence of such numerous, desperate, and skilful bands of professed ruffians. But what aggravates the case of this community is, that (as hath been before observed) it contributes more money to its government, for securing the persons and property of the people from the danger of thieves, and the importunity of vagrant beggars, than is paid for these
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purposes, by all the other communities on earth together.

For, in the first place, the community in England and Wales exclusively is subjected, by the authority of their government, to the payment of a tax, peculiar to this community alone, termed *poor rates*; which is levied by half-yearly payments, to the amount of four millions sterling yearly; for the expressly declared purpose, of maintaining and providing employ for all their idle or unemployed poor.

In the second place, this same community pays in the way of county rates, and other various taxes, charges, and contributions for protecting them from thieves and felons; for detecting, confining, and convicting those felons; for hanging them and punishing them, in jails, in houses of correction, and in Justitia gallies; and for that unnatural whim of transporting them to Botany Bay, a sum that may be estimated at more than one million yearly.

To this reckoning we must add that which is extorted from the honest and industrious part of this community, by the importunity of vagrant beggars; together with what is pettily pilfered and wasted by those beggars; who are permitted, notwithstanding the aforesaid enormous poor rate provision, to infest our fields, our highways, our streets, and our houses, in a degree beyond what

is seen in any other country, where no such settled provision is made for the poor. And this may be estimated at one million yearly.

And finally we must subjoin the value of what is robbed and plundered from the honest and industrious part of this community, or otherwise destroyed and wasted, by the various operations of highway robbers, foot-pads, thieves, pickpockets, swindlers, burglars or housebreakers, and above all by that modern sect of house-burners and barn-burners. And which together may be estimated at one more million yearly.

So that, when the whole expence incurred, shall be added to the loss sustained, by the honest and industrious part of this community, for and on account of, or by and through the means of the idle and unemployed part of the labouring commonalty, it will all together be found to exceed the sum of seven millions sterling. A sum far exceeding the whole revenue that is paid by any other state in Europe, France alone excepted, for every expence of its national government. And which exceeds three times over the whole revenue that was paid by this state, for the whole expence of its government in the reign of Charles the Second ; being little more than a century ago.

It is impossible that you can have so blindly or passively yielded up the use of your reason to the will of your government, as to shut your eyes
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against such gross and wanton abuse, when laid before your view; or to shut your ears against Common Sense, proffering to point out the certain and easy means or method whereby this enormous yearly waste of seven millions sterling may be saved to the community; whereby you may be completely secured from those dangers, dreads, and losses to which you are at present hourly subjected; and whereby such a number of your fellow citizens may be rescued and relieved from their present wretched noxious situation, and be converted into useful subjects of the State.

In searching out the true remedy of any evil, it is necessary to trace out the true primary cause of that evil, from its visible or apparent effects, through its various intermediate or secondary causes. Thus the present idleness or non-employment of those noxious poor appears to be the immediate cause of the evils sustained from them by the other part of the community. And it shall be shown how this idleness, with those consequent evils and abuses, including that enormous yearly waste of seven millions, are to be traced up, in the next stage, to the malversation of your government. First, in the matter of your Police. And second, in the matter of your Poor system.

The *general* charge against the nature and state of your police is, that your government has adapted and applies it solely to the purpose of *punishing*,
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and in no degree that of *preventing* the commission of crimes. Whereas, it is evident that punishment, as it cannot precede but only follow the commission of crimes, so cannot it possibly prevent or remedy those evils that unavoidably attend such commission. And as to that pretended effect of punishment to prevent the commission of crimes, by deterring the surviving criminals through sight or example of those punishments, your long woe-ful experience has sufficiently proved this self-evident fact, that *punishment*, whether exemplary or personal, never hath, never will, nor ever can, deter or reclaim one single criminal, so long as they shall all continue to be so situated as that they must of necessity either *steal* or *starve*. Inasmuch as the dread or even the suffering of punishment, however repeated or severe, cannot subdue the rage of hunger. Nor can a momentary death be compared with the long protracted pangs of starving. It is indeed a truth notorious, that the frequency of executions serves merely to harden the surviving criminals.

Punishment is the tyrannical and odious part of a government's duty; which a rational and equitable government will ever studiously shun, by carefully removing from before the people every stumbling block, and every temptation to the commission of crimes; whether through the facility of committing them, or through ignorance,
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levity, or distress. But a government that employs punishments, as the only means to prevent the commission of crimes, is altogether tyrannical. And, under such a government, the frequency of crimes and punishments will ever increase, in proportion as the degree of tyranny increases.

But if indeed it actually shall or may be within the power of a government to provide for every unemployed person in that State which it governs, the ready means of subsisting by the honest earnings of labour, then the execution of every one individual who shall have been forced, through the want of such means, upon the commission of crimes deserving that punishment, or who when willing to repent, has through the same want been forced to persist, must appear in the eye of that *Being* who made all men, and before whom all men are equal, a wanton murder committed by that government. And however innocent of this the people of that State may consider themselves individually, yet as a community, possessing the natural and rational right, together with full power to restrain their own government from doing wrong and to enforce its doing right, it must stand an indelible reproach on their national character, if they shall passively suffer their government to persist in so cruelly tyrannizing over the persons and wantonly sacrificing the lives of their fellow citizens.

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The means whereby that cruel and disgraceful frequency of punishments in this country may be prevented, by preventing the frequency of crimes, will more properly come into consideration, after we shall have examined the nature and present state of your Poor system.—As will appear.

This Poor system, as hath been said, is peculiar to the community of England and Wales ; for it exists in no one other community. And it will appear, when examined, to be the most viciously absurd system that could possibly be contrived by any government ; as being productive of numberless and grievous evils, but of no one good to that community wherein it exists. For, on the one hand, it is cruelly oppressive and perfectly useless to the wealthy and industrious part of this community, who are compelled by their government to support it. And, on the other hand, it is equally useless and highly pernicious to that other part of the community, the labouring commonalty ; for whose benefit it is pretended to have been instituted.

But, notwithstanding these be facts self-evident and universally known, yet as nothing less than the most forcible conviction can suffice to rid the minds of men from prejudices which, however absurd and erroneous, have been deeply impressed thereon by long habit, and never considered custom, it becomes here absolutely necessary to thoroughly

roughly investigate the nature of this Poor system. To trace its origin, with the motives, views, and causes that induced your government to first institute it. To examine the mischievous principle of the several regulations which it prescribes. And to point out the many grievous evils which it causes at present to this community: and which are increasing every day.

But as these remarks on the origin of this Poor system, with the motives of government for first instituting it, might appear to some prolix and tedious, they shall be stated apart in an Appendix.

Yet, however iniquitous the first institution of this Poor system was, and however injurious in its nature to the commonweal, the evils it caused at the first were altogether trivial and inconsiderable, when compared with the mischiefs it causes at this day. *Then* it was merely the serpent's egg. But hatched as it hath been and fostered, for near two centuries, by the viciousness of the government and the passive negligence of the people, it hath grown up to acquire in these present times the fabulous properties of the *Lernean Hydra*. Every attempt that hath been made to strike off one of its many venomous heads having only served to produce two more in its stead, until they have so multiplied that only its utter extinction can relieve this community from its all-destroying powers.

For that statute, the 43 Eliz. which was then devised and intended merely as a temporary provision for such of the labouring commonalty as happened to be, at that new and extraordinary juncture, idle, unemployed, and dangerous to government, hath been converted, in process of time, into a system to debauch the whole labouring commonalty of this country, and to seduce them from industry. For what argument or stimulation to labour and industry doth or can there exist in the minds of these labouring poor, saving alone the fear or apprehension of future want and distress to themselves and their families? Withdraw that fear, and you thereby withdraw from the minds of the labouring commonalty the sole stimulation to, not only labour and industry, but to frugality, sobriety, care of their families, and every degree of due subordination. And this Poor system doth, at present, not only withdraw that sole stimulation to all these virtues, but it holds forth to the labouring poor a tempting lure to all the opposite vices. The sense and knowledge that their respective parishes are compelled, by law, to provide all necessaries for themselves and their families, whenever they shall chuse to demand it; or, in their own phrase, "That the parish is bound to find them," is in itself sufficient to debauch the mind and vitiate the morals of any labouring commonalty on earth. And that our labouring commonalty
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are not, through this cause alone. (was there none other) still more vicious than we find them, is owing merely to a peculiar rectitude of their own natural disposition.

But it would be difficult for any government to contrive a measure more wantonly wicked, or more mischievously and unnecessarily pernicious to the good of the people, than is that regulation of this Poor system which compels each several parish (and in still more mischievous subdivision each town and vill within a parish) to distinctly maintain all its own respective poor. For thereby all these several parishes, towns, and vills, are perpetually involved in feuds, disputes, and expensive lawsuits betwixt themselves. And the community at large is thereby subjected to the enormous expence of at least one million sterling yearly paid by it, for this one purpose, and for no one other individual purpose on earth, than to determine, by these troublesome, expensive lawsuits, whether this one individual or the other of these numberless parish paupers, who must at any rate be one and all of them maintained at the expence of the community, shall be so maintained in this one particular parish, or in some one other parish.

The particular and curious process of this Parish and Poor settlement regulation shall also, to avoid prolixity, be stated in the Appendix.

We have next to consider that other regulation

of this Poor system which respects the manner of maintaining and employing those parish poor.—It is ordered by law that two or more overseers, for each parish, town, or vill, shall be annually appointed under the hand and seal of two or more justices of the peace, for the purpose of providing meat, drink, cloathing, lodging, and all other necessities for all the poor and needy within such parish, town, or vill, with full power in those overseers to assess each parishioner in a proportionate share of whatever expence shall be deemed requisite for so maintaining those poor. And, upon nonpayment, to distrain for the same.

And, by way of recompence to the parish for this expence, it is enacted that the said poor shall be set to work by *those overseers*, on flax, hemp, wool, thread, iron, and other wares and stuff; and that each parish shall be entitled to all the benefit of this Poor work. And the overseers are ordered to provide a convenient stock of these said wares and stuff. And for the purchasing this convenient stock, those overseers are farther vested with a like power to assess all the parishioners in a sufficient sum of money.

But it was soon discovered by the parishes, that this intended recompence for their expence turned out to be an addition to that expence, of nearly so much money as was the first cost of those said wares and stuff. For they found themselves charged
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in a high price for that first cost ; and, when these raw materials had passed through the hands of their workhouse manufacturers, they found the value of those manufactures to be almost nothing. And, for this reason, all the several parishes have long abandoned the pursuit of that intended recompence from parish workhouse labour on wares and stuff. Excepting it may be a very few of these parishes ; where the numbers, the opulence, or the indolence of the parishioners render them indifferent to that addition of expence which is caused to them by the whim of a few consequential individuals, who chuse to amuse themselves with experiments at the expence of others.

For it is now about seventy years, namely, in the 9th George, since the parishes obtained a statute to legally release them from that *compulsory working clause* in the 43d Elizabeth, and for enabling each parish to contract with any person or persons for the provision and maintenance of its respective poor, at so much a head. And accordingly this mode of contracting for the maintenance of their poor has now become general. The labour of these poor being ever thrown into the bargain ; as a value perfectly understood by both the parties contracting.

The nature of this parish maintenance may be guessed at. But the conjecture of those who do not know it will fall short of the reality. It is a
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common saying, that " Beggars must not be " Chosers." The true force of that saying is nowhere so fully felt as in a parish workhouse. In truth these paupers feel their poverty to be a crime grievously punishable. No criminal confined for the purpose of punishment feels that punishment more severely than the pauper feels his. The only difference is, that the pauper has the choice of liberating himself. And of this choice they commonly avail themselves, soon after they have tasted the nature of parish workhouse discipline. They quit their confinement; either upon furlough, in collusion with the contractor, who continues to receive the parish allowance for these temporary absentees; or otherwise they totally desert the workhouse. But their minds having been once habituated to idleness, very few, if any of them, ever return to labour and industry. In both these cases they commonly first try their chance in vagrant beggary; and thus load the community in a double capacity. If they fail in that profession, they commonly betake themselves to pilfering and stealing, at the risk of the gallows or transportation, rather than remain in the parish workhouse.

It may appear unnecessary, perhaps tiresome, to farther demonstrate the natural impossibility of employing the idle poor to any sort of public benefit, on manufacturing these said wares and stuff in
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parish workhouses. Nevertheless as it actually happens that there still exist in this country certain well meaning individuals who, not being convinced of that self-evident truth confirmed by the experience of the several parishes for above a century past, are ever contriving and proposing schemes for amending and continuing the practice of this pernicious Poor law, in direct counteraction of the immutable laws of Nature and Reason, it may be proper, for the satisfaction of such individuals, to state the following supposed case. As thus,

Supposing it might be possible to employ the idle poor on manufacturing these said materials in workhouses to some good purpose. Nay even supposing it possible that all these materials could be manufactured by those idle poor, under their annual overseers, in equal perfection and equally cheap as they are manufactured at present by the industrious skilful workmen employed under the direction of ingenious master manufacturers, what would be the consequence in even that case? Or where would be the benefit resulting therefrom to the community? The market for those manufactures, both home and foreign, is limited; and is already fully supplied by the private manufacturers. Of course these workhouse manufactures must come in as a glut to the market; and so must either remain unfold and useless; or otherwise, if sold abroad, or consumed at home even for the use
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of those parish poor themselves, they must operate a diminution of the private manufacturing market; and thereby diminish in a proportionate degree the present employ of the industriously disposed private workmen; and so force them into the parish workhouse.—And thus *Circum Circa*.

The industrious, ingenious, skilful, and highly deserving master manufacturers in Manchester, in Birmingham, in Leeds, in Norwich, in Halifax, and in all the manufacturing towns and counties, feel already in a variety of shapes, and in an intolerable degree, the pernicious effects of this Poor system, on their workmen, and on their own industry. It is high time to relieve them from these intolerable grievances, instead of aggravating them by attempting moral impossibilities.

And thus, my fellow citizens, you have placed before your view, at least, a true sketch of the nature, and also some few of the pernicious effects of your Poor system. It may be added that all these evils have of very late amazingly increased, and are daily increasing. It may therefore be presumed you will conclude they ought to be diminished; or, if possible, remedied. And, on this presumption we proceed to the proposed remedy.

It must appear from the preceding sketch that, exclusive of this wantonly wicked parish regulation, the most essential and productive vices in this Poor system are, first, the mode which it prescribes

scribes for employing the idle poor on work that is perfectly useless and unprofitable to the community. And, second, the manner of providing for and maintaining those idle poor in workhouses under the despotic authority and arbitrary will of overseers and contractors, instead of placing them in the capacity of earning an honest independent subsistence, by means of useful labour and industry. Indeed this second mentioned abuse is an unavoidable consequence or effect of the first. Because, if the work or pretended work upon which these poor are employed is altogether useless and of no value to the community, they can have no right or claim to the wages of useful industry. And so *vice versa*, on the part of the community. At any rate these two abuses are so complicated and jumbled together, that they cannot be separated either in their existence or in the remedy. In fact this whole Poor system evidently appears to be a jumble of gross, unnatural absurdities, contrived solely for the ease, the convenience, and the despotic purposes of government.

But the nature and tendency of the leading vices and abuses in this Poor system having been thus pointed out and ascertained, the nature of the remedy to these abuses will naturally suggest itself to every mind. Being simply this.—Devise or find out some species or mode of employing all the present idle, unemployed poor on work that shall,

in the first place, be useful, valuable, and beneficial to the community. And which shall, in the second place, be freely open and readily accessible or attainable by all and every one of those idle poor, without question or difficulty of any kind, but immediately on their applying for it.

For it must here be kept in view that, under the description of idle, unemployed poor, is comprehended not only the present useless parish paupers, but all those others who subsist at present in idleness, by vagrant begging, by thieving, and other vicious courses.

It will farther occur that this supposed work must necessarily be of a nature that requires no previous practical skill or knowledge; but merely bodily labour; so as that each and every one of those idle poor, who is not actually lame or impotent, shall be capable of being usefully employed on it.

And, so much being premised, it naturally follows that, the present idle poor, when they shall be thus employed on work useful, valuable, and beneficial to the community, will become entitled, according to reason and the right order of things, to wages that shall be adequate and sufficient to provide them the necessaries of life. And upon the same principles the community is warranted and ought to pay them such wages.

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There is not in nature a truth more certain or more self-evident than this, that in a country extensive, rich in manufacture and commerce, as Britain is, there cannot possibly exist a want, but that on the contrary there must be a superabundance of ways and means to usefully employ all the present inhabitants.—And a great many more. No! the want of useful employ is not the cause that above one third part of our labouring commonalty exist in their present unnaturally wretched and noxious state; crawling about like useless unheeded vermin; or otherwise savagely preying upon their fellow citizens; who in return hang them up like dogs; or transport them by hundreds to starve in the most distant corners of the earth. Whilst the community is, through this wantonly wicked and unnaturally tyrannical whim, of Botany Bay transportation, subjected to the expence of paying yearly the enormous sum of about one hundred pounds sterling for each wretch thus cruelly punished. Besides an equal sum for each of those numerous unoffending citizens who, in consequence of this absurd whim, are equally transported and equally punished.

However, amongst the many branching paths of honest industry that will afterwards open and become accessible to our present idle poor, the wide highway of agriculture, or the breaking in

and cultivating our present barren and waste lands, at the public expence, appears to be the fittest means for first breaking in those idle poor to labour, and initiating them to industry. This cultivation likewise appears to be, in every one other respect and property, exactly that species of employ which hath been herein before described and required, for this desired purpose, of setting on work all our present idle and unemployed poor.

For, in the first place, this breaking in those barren and waste lands is a species of employ highly useful and beneficial to the community. There are in this island many hundred thousand acres of land, equal in measurement to two fifth parts of its whole superfice, which at present lay in a state almost equally lost and useless to the community as if they did not exist; or were covered by the ocean; and which, in the present disposition of the private owners, will remain for ever in that useless state, unless the community shall undertake to cultivate them at its own proper expence. And, of these so many hundred thousand acres, there is not one single acre, of accessibly level surface, that may not be rendered productive to some one purpose.—Be that surface bare rock, barren sand, dead clay, gravel, marsh, or bog. All these will yield to the power of human art, labour, and industry. Nor is there a single acre of these present useless lands that, when thus properly broke
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in and improved, will not prove a clear gain to the state, or accession of domestic territory, equal in value to thirty pounds sterling; according to the present rate or value of properly improved lands in this country. Exclusive of many other benefits that will accrue to this state from such undertaking.

For public utility or convenience is not the sole argument for breaking in and cultivating those present barren and useless lands. The still stronger argument of public necessity calls loudly for such an undertaking. For that the lands at present cultivated barely produce, in even a plentiful year, sufficient to supply the necessities of the poor inhabitants; and at the same time to feed the luxuries of the rich, who will ever be first served. But, in a year of scarcity, this state has, in these later times, been necessitated to purchase grain from other states, to the amount of £.300,000. Such has been the late incredible increase of luxury in this country; which ever, till within these twenty years last past, used to export every year about £.300,000 sterling worth of grain.

Nay, besides that want of necessary food, this state is at present totally dependent on the will or caprice of other states, for a production of the earth which is so indispensably necessary to the very being of her navigation, warlike as well as commercial, that neither the one nor the other can
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exist without it : and which is, at the same time, of a quality so bulky, that she rarely possesses above one year's store of it ; that is, hemp.—And for that one production, when obtained on even these terms, this state pays yearly large sums of hard money to foreigners, possibly to enemies. Surely there is as little policy as there is of charity in this, to pay such large sums of money yearly to those who will probably employ that money against the state, instead of paying it in wages to our own unemployed poor, for cultivating this important production in our own soil ; which is perfectly adapted to produce it.

But, besides grain and hemp, there is flax, tobacco, and many other productions of the earth, which this state purchases from other states, at a great yearly expence ; and which can be cultivated at home with great success.

In the second place, this breaking in and cultivating those present barren and useless lands, for the public benefit, at public expence, is a species of employ that will be open, readily attainable and accessible, without question or difficulty of any kind, by all and every one of our present idle, unemployed poor, of every description ; in the manner that shall be pointed out in the sequel.

This is also a species of employ that demands no previous practical skill or knowledge ; and on which, through that reason, each and every one of those

those idle, unemployed poor would be qualified to work usefully, provided he is not lame or impotent.

And thus, by a public undertaking of this nature, you may throw open a wide and all-receiving gate ; through which the whole and every one of the present idle, unemployed, and noxious poor may enter ; and earn, by their labour, the means of subsisting honestly, in a state of rational, useful independence.

Nevertheless your holding forth the means of employ will not, alone and of itself, suffice to accomplish the reform of those many evils and abuses that are at present caused by the idle, noxious poor. For it cannot be expected that those of them who have been long habituated to vicious idleness, will at once or of their own accord betake themselves to painful labour, even when held forth to them. And therefore, at the same time that you throw open this gate to labour and industry, it will be absolutely necessary to closely shut up every possible access to their subsisting in idleness, by begging, thieving, or other vicious courses ; so as that, finding themselves effectually precluded from the possibility of subsisting otherwise than by labour, they shall be forced to submit, and voluntarily betake themselves to it.

To effect this will demand, and especially at the first, the vigorous exertion and watchful attention
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of a police, formed upon a very different principle from that which exists at present. And this necessarily recals us to the more particular consideration of your present police, or municipal system.

It hath been said in general that the nature and form of your present police is adapted and applied solely to the purpose of punishing, and not in the least to that of preventing the commission of crimes and abuses. And the reason of this is, that your government, possessing a power altogether unlimited and uncontrouled by the people, did, in the formation of your present existing police, consult only its own interest and despotic purposes, without regarding the good or welfare of the people. And herein the conduct of your government was still less excusable, than even in the matter of your Poor system. For this reason in particular, that the people did, at one time, actually possess the privilege of chusing their own municipal magistrates, by the consent of the crown itself. And so continued in possession during several centuries, under the Saxon government, and also after the Norman conquest, until the 1 Ed. 3. when the infamous Mortimer, discovering that this privilege allowed to the people could be of some use to the crown, forcibly wrested it from them. As will appear from a retrospect to the origin of this municipal system. And, to which end, and likewise

wise for other good purposes, it will be necessary to take a slight glance at the origin of your government in general, so far as it relates to the institution of that municipal system. But, in order to avoid digression, this too shall be placed in the Appendix.

Soon after that privilege of the people had been wrested from them by the crown, the stile of these municipal magistrates was changed from *Conservators of the Peace*, to that of *The King's Justices of the Peace*. And, notwithstanding the crown is the only one part of the community that holds no interest or concern in the administration of this office, as not being in the least liable to be affected by its good or ill management, yet, ever since that said usurpation of the people's right by Mortimer, the crown alone hath possessed the whole exclusive power to nominate, appoint, commission, superintend, and direct the magistrates who execute that office.

Whilst the people, who are so deeply interested, whose peace, safety, order, well-being and happiness as a community, depend altogether on the due action of this municipal magistracy, have not the slightest voice, either in chusing men fit for that office, or in afterwards superintending, directing, or controuling their conduct. The people can neither punish nor reward these magistrates. Of course they can neither prevent their doing

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wrong, nor compel them to do right. These *King's* justices of the peace are all volunteers in office; they owe no duty of any kind to the people, and they perform as little for them. And, in consequence, the use or virtue of this important municipal magistracy is as completely lost to the people as if it did not exist.

Where these justices may be said to act at all, as in this enormous capital, it is merely for the purpose of inculcating a slavish, servile dread and awe of the regal authority; by bringing malefactors to punishment, in the name of the King, for crimes committed against their fellow citizens. In which capacity these Westminster justices are very aptly termed *Thief Catchers*. Though, even in this part of their office, they are collusively permitted to sacrifice the good of the community to their own gain. For they are suffered to protect those malefactors so long as they can afford to pay for that protection. So soon as this ability to pay ceases, the justice then executes his office; by apprehending and convicting the malefactors, as offenders against the royal dignity. And, for each capital conviction, these justices are enabled, by the authority of government, to draw from the community a reward of forty pounds.

In the other part of their office, these justices still serve themselves at the expence of the community, in a variety of shapes; and particularly
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by encouraging insolence, discord, and strife, amongst the ignorant and lower class of the people; in order to sell their warrants for bringing the parties before them. And, in this branch of their office, they are very properly denominated *Trading Justices*.

But, as to preventing the commission of crimes and abuses, or preserving the peace and good order of the community, or the enforcing a due observance of the laws, with industry, morality, decency, and a proper subordination amongst the lower class of the people, which is the sole end and purpose of this municipal magistracy: to all these said purposes it may be truly said, that “ in these our days there is no judge in Israel; but every man doth that which seemeth good in his own eye;” provided he does not trespass against the sacred majesty of the crown. So he be an obedient subject to the king, it matters not what sort of a citizen he is.

From this slight but true description of the present state of your municipal magistracy, the true cause of its present inefficacy must occur to the mind of every one. Neither can it be at all difficult to discover the means or method to remedy that inefficacy; together with all those disorders, evils, and abuses, which flow from that said inefficacy.

Nevertheless, as that necessary reform of your

municipal government cannot be looked for, until such time as you, opening your eyes to your present general situation, shall acquire an actual, real, free and uninfluenced representation of yourselves in your legislature; and as such a representation, when formed, will stand in no need of direction or advice as to the mode of reforming this and every other present abuse of your government, therefore the following description of the plain and easy means or method whereby your municipal government may be rendered truly effectual to the *Salus Populi*, which is not only the *Suprema Lex*, but the sole end and use of all government, is here stated, merely for the purpose of convincing and satisfying one and all of you, that the present inefficacy of your municipal government, with those consequent disorders, evils, and abuses, are not caused by unavoidable necessity; but that, on the contrary, all these evils can be easily, readily, and effectually remedied, so soon and whensoever you shall be pleased to adopt that naturally right and absolutely necessary step; which will speedily remedy this and every one other abuse; but, without which, no one abuse ever will be reformed.

For whereas, at present, every man who wishes to stick that feather in his cap, or to make a gainful job of it, is immediately on application appointed to this important municipal office by the simple *Dedimus Potestatem* of the king; without the

the slightest regard had to his qualification for that office, in respect either of honour and integrity, or of ability and skill. And whereas all these men, when so vested, considering themselves as volunteers, bound by no tie of duty or obligation, act in that office merely as they please, when they please, or not at all if they please; whereby this mighty important magistracy is become altogether titular or a job, and perfectly nugatory, in fact noxious to the community. Now it is morally certain and clearly manifest, that all these several causes of this present inefficacy would be completely remedied and removed, by the simple act of vesting the direction, superintendence, and controul of this their own municipal magistracy in the people; who are alone entitled to this power upon all the principles of nature, of reason, and the due order of things; and who alone are qualified to properly exercise that power.

For, in the first place, the people, in their different local situations, are alone competent to know, and consequently to chuse from amongst themselves, men that are duly qualified in the aforesaid respects to properly execute this important office. And their own interest would lead them, when uninfluenced by the crown or its corrupt dependents, to elect only such men.

In the second place, the people alone possess the power, and inclination through interest, to
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compel these magistrates, when chosen, to duly discharge their duty ; through the only natural and truly effectual means of *Rewards* and *Punishments*, in the following manner ; which nearly corresponds with that mode for reforming this municipal magistracy, which was proposed by the ingenious and learned *Lambard*, who lived in the reign of James the First, and grievously complains of the numerous and unsuitable appointments to that office, with the consequent abuses, even in his day. Though that abuse was then merely trifling, when compared with the present.

Let each county be divided, for this particular purpose, by a standing act of the legislature, into five or six districts or sections, less or more, as may seem proper. And let this mighty city of Westminster be likewise divided into a proper number of districts. Let the people, in each of these several districts, be assembled by the sheriff of the county, at a certain place, annually on a fixed day ; then to chuse, for their own district, one justice of the peace ; a man of respectable character ; who may be willing, from public-spirited motives, to execute that office without fee or reward. And let these same people also then chuse, for their own district, one other justice ; a person of good ability, well skilled in the functions of that office ; and of good repute ; who shall agree to reside at a particular place in that district ; and shall
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not practise in any other profession ; but shall dedicate his whole time and attention to the duties of that charge ; and who shall, in compensation for his time and trouble, receive a salary from the people, that shall be adequate to the importance and utility of the office.

And so, in each of the several districts throughout the whole country, and in this great city of Westminster, let two justices of the peace be chosen annually by the people : one of these justices to be honorary, and the other stipendiary. All these justices, when thus chosen annually by the people, may, if thought proper, be returned to the crown ; and from thence receive a commission for executing their office. Or the legislature may, by other fixed means, empower them to act.

Upon this principle, of *Annual* elections by the people in the several districts, there appears to be no need for penal or compulsory clauses ; which will be ever found nugatory to the purpose of enforcing the good conduct of those magistrates. For the sense that these, who are to be his electors in the ensuing year, are the witnesses of his present conduct, will ever act upon the justice, and particularly the stipendiary justice, as a sufficiently powerful impulse to his doing right, and would equally restrain him from doing wrong. Though, after some time, these elections might, if found proper, be made biennial.

And

And thus you perceive that, by means of this one simply natural, rational, and just act, of assigning (properly restoring) to the people their right to annually chuse their own municipal magistrates, in the manner here described, this magistracy may be rendered completely effectual to the purpose of *Preventing* the commission of crimes, and of enforcing a due observance of the laws; which at present are a mere tinkling cymbal. Whereby the peace, the safety, and good order of the community would be re-established, and regularly preserved. And by no other means can this important object be possibly attained.

In particular, such an effectual municipal magistracy could easily and speedily ferret out every one idle person, from their present means of subsisting by thieving, vagrant begging, and other vicious courses.

But here we are necessarily recalled to a more circumstantial consideration of the ways and means whereby these present idle, noxious, and perhaps at first refractory poor, when they shall be thus ferreted out of their idle recesses, may be compelled to accept of that employ, which is here proposed to be proffered them.

To effect this purpose, the legislature may, in the first place, establish in each county a proper committee; to consist of all those newly-modelled justices of the peace in that county, for the time
being,

being, by virtue of their office; and of so many more public-spirited respectable persons as may seem proper.

Under the immediate direction of this committee, it would be necessary to appoint a county treasury; properly empowered to collect and receive, from every parish within the said county, the several sums that were last assessed on it, for parish rates, county rates, and other municipal taxes. For it is possible that, in the first year of this proposed undertaking, all these sums may be wanted. Possibly more may be required in that first year; which in such case may be proportionately assessable by the committee. The books of this treasury, together with minutes of the committee, to be laid open at the end of every month, for the inspection of such as contribute to the expence.

Each of these county committees may also be empowered to survey and fix upon such part or parts of the barren or waste lands, within that respective county, as may be the most proper to first set the idle poor at work upon. As also to ascertain the value that shall be paid by the public, to the private proprietors of those lands. That value to be liquidated, as in other such cases, by means the least burthensome to the public. And if, in any one or more counties, there shall not be a sufficiency of barren or waste lands to employ all its

idle poor, then this superabundance of poor may be turned over to the nearest county that shall abound in barren lands. And such an allowance in money to be made, by the county turning over its idle poor, to the county receiving them, as to the legislature shall seem meet and just.

Farther, these county committees may be empowered to provide all necessary implements of husbandry. As also beasts of draught; which may properly be oxen; because these will be the least expensive to the public; in fact no expence at all, besides their temporary keep. And, in like manner, to provide skilful, careful, and active bailiffs, and superintendants of the work; with other necessary officers; and every thing besides that may be requisite for immediately setting the idle poor on work. Such as ready markets for accommodating them with provisions and other necessaries. As also houses, or habitations; which may be constructed of wood, and removable; either at the public expence; or otherwise by contract with private undertakers; upon the allowance of sixpence a-week for each labourer, to be deducted from their wages.

Every thing being thus prepared for immediately setting the idle poor on work, notice may be given in each parish church, and in other the most public manner, that every idle or unemployed person within that county, whether parish pauper or other, provided they

they are not lame or impotent, shall repair, by a fixed day, to the place appointed by the county committee; there to be set on work, and to receive daily wages for their labour.

It may be presumed that, by the day so fixed, the parish workhouses will be greatly disburdened of their paupers. And also, that every one of the present vagrant beggars; with the greater part of the other idle, noxious poor, will, upon their being informed of the methods intended for completely cutting off their former means of subsisting, voluntarily repair to the place appointed.

But as it may be also presumed that some of the hardened sinners will require coercion, it would, on that account, be necessary that, immediately before issuing the aforesaid public notice, the two justices of each district, attended by proper persons in every parish within such district, should visit every one house or dwelling within these respective parishes; and strictly examine and record the name of every individual living or lodging in each house, together with the nature of his employ, or means of subsisting. And to every one of those who shall not appear to be properly employed, a ticket or order may be given, to be delivered by him to the clerk of the public work in that county; who should again make a daily return to the justices, of every person presenting such tickets; as also of all such as may have deserted the work.

At the outset of such undertaking it would be necessary that the justices should repeat their visits, in the manner aforesaid, every week ; though specially to suspected houses. But, after two or three months, the necessity of those frequent visits would cease. For, by that time, the most artful of those offenders would be traced out ; and the most obstinate of them subdued, by the following mode of treatment, in a proper house of correction.

Let the refractory offender be confined in a dark cell ; secluded from all conversation or communication with any one, saving his keeper alone. For it is the society of others, wicked as themselves, that supports the obdurate minds of these unfeeling wretches, and renders them callous to shame and punishment. Let him be there fed as sparingly as may be consistent with existence. And, if thought necessary, hard labour may be added, with severe correction on failure of his task.

Such discipline would, in the space of a fortnight, subdue the most hardened offender. So as that he would, immediately on his being liberated, thankfully accept of the employ offered him. And, for his whole life after, he would be properly cautious of incurring the necessity for returning to the cell of discipline. Which he would be sensible must inevitably follow his again transgressing.

It

It is clearly manifest, as well as morally certain, that a due application of the means here mentioned would, in the space of a very few months, completely suppress thieving and robbing; and cleanly root them out of this country.

As to vagrant begging, that would totally vanish and disappear on the very day that the aforesaid public notice of general employ should be promulgated. Seeing that, exclusive of the active exertion of a proper municipal magistracy, there would be no person found weak enough to give charity, when there could exist no shadow of plea for begging. And the moment that weak minded charity shall cease, vagrant begging will also cease.

Though, in order to more securely guard these well-disposed bestowers of charity against their own weakness, a pecuniary mulct may be imposed on every person convicted of giving charity to a vagrant beggar, after the day fixed. And this is suggested from an example in the Austrian Netherlands; where vagrant begging prevailed some years ago to an amazing degree, (though on far more excusable plea than here); and was in one day completely suppressed; as it still remains. Notwithstanding these Netherlanders possessed none of those means for employing their idle poor, which abound in this country. For they had not a yard of waste land to cultivate; they had no poor's rate

rate or other fund ready prepared for paying wages to their idle poor; and they had next to no manufacture or commerce; yet abounding in population to an excess. And, from their precedent, certain of the foregoing hints are borrowed.

As to the actually lame or impotent poor, these might still be maintained at the public expence. But such would not be found very numerous. The whole of them in each county might be placed under the direction of the county committee; and be maintained in two or more of the present parish workhouses; on terms far more comfortable to them, and infinitely less expensive to the public, than at present.—Allowing very liberally, the sum of five hundred thousand pounds would more than suffice to comfortably maintain all the actually lame and impotent poor in England and Wales, even in the first year of this proposed undertaking. But this expence would diminish every year after the first, by means that shall be shown.

And in order to still more fully convince you of the perfect rationality, the ready practicability, and great utility of this proposed public undertaking, we shall venture to offer, not an exact calculation, but a rational conjecture at the expence that would be caused to the public, by such an undertaking; together with a state of those funds that are ready provided in this country for defraying such expence. And we shall farther present a sketch of the

the several benefits and advantages that would accrue to the public from such a measure.

The only material expence that would be caused to the public by such undertaking, would consist in the wages to be paid to the public labourers. It would be unnecessary, and also imprudent, to pay these labourers more wages than would suffice to purchase them the necessaries of life. And as they would feed in messes, sixpence a day would suffice for that purpose, provided they should be lodged at the public expence; otherwise seven pence, as one penny a day would be deducted therefrom for the contractor, in the manner mentioned.

Thus the wages of each labourer would cost the public three shillings and sixpence a week. And suppose four hundred thousand labourers should, at the first outset of such undertaking, be set on work in England and Wales, the wages of these, at the aforesaid rate, would cost the public three millions six hundred and forty thousand pounds for that first year. And farther supposing that the cost of implements, the keep of bullocks, and other charges, should amount to three hundred and forty thousand pounds more, the whole expence to the public on this proposed undertaking would be four millions, for even that first and far most expensive year.

And if to this we shall add the five hundred thousand pounds before assigned for the maintenance

nance of all the lame and impotent poor, then the whole expence that would be caused to the public, by thus setting on useful work all the present idle, noxious able-bodied poor in England and Wales, and also for maintaining all the actually lame and impotent poor, would amount to four millions five hundred thousand pounds for that said first year. As for the consideration to be paid the private proprietors of the barren and waste lands, that would not be a ready money expence.

And to furnish or answer this said expence of four millions five hundred thousand pounds, there exists ready in this state, first, the present poor's rate tax, amounting yearly to four millions. And next there are those various sums paid at present by this community for protecting them from thieves and rogues, for detecting, convicting, hanging, punishing, and transporting malefactors; together with the value of what is at present stole, robbed, plundered, and wasted by those malefactors; and farther, what is extorted, pilfered, and wasted by vagrant beggars; amounting together, as hath been shewn, to above three millions. And all which said various sums would, by this proposed measure, be saved to the community.

These two collected funds, making together the sum of seven millions, at present drawn annually from this community and wasted without any sort of return, would here stand forth as a fund ready provided

provided and prepared to furnish the expence required for this proposed mighty national undertaking ; without calling upon the people for one shilling of new or additional contribution on that account.—And so this hitherto vicious abuse of her government would hereby be suddenly converted into an advantage particular to this state ; that she alone of all states on earth stands possessed of a fund ready prepared for immediately setting on foot such a mighty national undertaking, without subjecting the people to any new tax : whereas any one of these other states, undertaking such an important national improvement, must necessarily burden the people with new and heavy taxes to furnish the expence of it. At the same time it is proper to observe that, unless this state shall be prevailed on to apply that said present wasted fund of seven millions to the purpose of such a national undertaking, she is in that particular worse situated than any one other state, by all the difference of seven millions sterling, at present annually wasted by her government.

Nay it appears, from the preceding statement, that, after defraying every necessary charge of that first and most expensive year, there would still remain, out of the said fund of seven millions, a surplus or saving to the community of one million and a half. And this large saving of expence to

the community would be the first pecuniary fruits of that proposed measure.

And neither are we to reckon or consider the four millions, that have been here allotted for the expence of that first year, to be for ever lost without any return to the community, in like manner as the said seven millions are expended at present. No! the community would receive, for these four millions, the same sort of returns, though perhaps not in an equal degree, as the farmer receives for his money expended on labourers' wages, on working cattle, and implements of husbandry.

It may not perhaps be greatly necessary to condescend upon the degree of farming returns that the public might receive from this first year's expence. Nevertheless we may, for the sake of farther illustration, venture the following guess at an estimate of these returns.

And, considering the process of first breaking in barren lands to be exceeding difficult, tedious, and laborious; as consisting in the removing, changing, and mixing one species of soil with its opposite, or perhaps fetching soil altogether from a distance, we shall allot the labour of four persons, for a whole year, to properly break in one acre of barren land, and bring it to an improved state of cultivation. At this rate, 400,000 labourers, being the number to which wages have been assigned
for

for the first year, would in that year duly improve 100,000 acres of barren land. Which, when so improved, would create a clear accession or addition of so much *domestic territory, that is not liable to be lost or wrested from the state.* And which, at the present value of improved lands in this country, would, in money, be equal to three millions sterling.

These newly-improved lands the public could either farm out, on their own account ; or otherwise they might be sold to private purchasers : for of such purchasers there would be no want for those lands, when once brought into a proper state of cultivation.

Though at the same time it may be proper to remark, that it is vain to expect that these barren lands ever will or can be broke in by means of private undertakers, at their own expence ; even if they were to get those lands for nothing. First, because of the very great first cost, and the inferior and slow returns for that first cost. And next, because of a still more weighty impediment ; that private undertakers cannot, in like manner as the public, have the command of various and opposite soils ; without which it is not possible to break in barren lands. Sundry other obstructions there are to private undertakings of this nature ; forming together a moral impossibility of ever breaking in

the present barren lands of this country, otherwise than by a public undertaking.

But the said 100,000 acres, so supposed to be improved in the first year, might at any rate be subjected to the two following conditions. First, that they should for ever remain divided into farms of fifty acres each. And second, that they should, where possible, be cultivated with hemp and flax. Though this new accession yearly to the present stock of cultivated lands would naturally induce the farmers of other lands better adapted, to cultivate these articles. Or, if these farmers could not be induced otherwise, bounties might at the first be applied.

Each of these fifty-acre farms, being arable land, would require two men to cultivate it. And thus the 100,000 acres, so improved in the first year, would furnish in the succeeding year a newly-acquired field, that did not exist before, to employ and maintain 4000 peasants, with their families. And this new field of employ, extending every year, would serve to re-establish in this country a strong, robust peasantry. Which, though they be in the day of danger the only sure bulwark of defence, have in this country become nearly extinct. Our labouring commonalty having, through the nature of our government, been converted into debauched, enervated artisans or manufacturers, and

and the effeminate, useless trappings of luxury; or otherwise into thieves, beggars, or parish paupers. Moreover, this yearly accession of new employ on those improved lands, would every year diminish the original number of those public labourers; and of course would every year diminish the public expence on that undertaking.

Though when once the present idle, noxious poor should be fairly initiated into industry on this proposed public undertaking, as at a school; and should be properly kept at hard labour by active bailiffs, they would soon find out for themselves a variety of means to subsist by easier labour. And, provided those means should be honest, it matters little to the community what they are. If they shall be honest, they must needs be useful. And a proper municipal magistracy will effectually prevent their subsisting by dishonest means.

For instance, in these Austrian Netherlands, which are a pattern of agricultural industry, numbers of men and women earn a subsistence, by collecting off the streets and highways all matter fit for manure; which they carry to their respective heaps, and sell it to the farmer; whereby the earth hath every thing restored that ever it produced; to the great benefit of that country. And by useful means of this nature might many thousands earn an honest subsistence in this country.

And

And thereby the number of public labourers would gradually diminish every year after the first.

So as that, within a very few years after commencing this proposed public undertaking, public expence on that account would totally cease. At least the original argument of public necessity would cease. The state would have a free choice whether, upon the ground of public utility and convenience, that undertaking should be continued in any degree, and to what degree.

And as soon as that should be the case, then could this community congratulate itself upon being completely delivered, in every sense, shape, and respect, from the heavy burden of seven millions sterling, at present drawn from them every year by means of their government, and wasted.

But, at all times, a public undertaking of this nature would be highly eligible, for the purpose of furnishing an asylum, or the means of honest subsistence, to those hitherto cruelly treated citizens who, upon every rumour of our frequent wars, have been dragged from their families, and often from a comfortable employ, into the military service of the state. And, the moment that necessity for their service has ceased, government hath uniformly and without remorse dismissed them, on the cruel terms of that aforesaid alternative, *To steal or starve*. Such base ingratitude, and cruel,
unfeeling

unfeeling tyranny, so diametrically opposite to the true national character of the English people, furnishes in itself a sufficient proof of the voice or share that these people hold at present in their own government.

Moreover a just, a humane, and equitable government would assuredly consider it a duty to provide some honest means of employ and subsistence for those numerous females who subsist at present by means not less vicious, and if possible still more disgraceful to human nature, than do the noxious males. A municipal magistracy, such as hath been here described, could speedily drive these females out of their present vicious and noxious means of subsisting. But what is then to become of them? Must they be left to starve? That would be inconsistent with the principles of a just and equitable government. Or must they be maintained in idleness, at a great public expence, in Magdalen and penitentiary houses erected in every parish? That would not be the conduct of a wise government. But an equitable and wise government would first find out useful employment for them; and then it would force them into that employ; of which there is no want in this country, easily within the power of an honest government.

For instance, the linen that is worn by the inhabitants of this country is purchased from other states, at a vast expence of hard money. We certainly

tainly can come at the flax by the same means as these other states do. We may, upon the plan of this proposed undertaking, rear it at home, without interfering with the other wants of the inhabitants. Why then should such multitudes of females be permitted to subsist in vicious, noxious idleness, when they can be put in the way of earning an honest subsistence, by means so beneficial to the state as would be the fabricating this linen ?

But if this state could once cultivate within itself a quantity of hemp and flax, sufficing or nearly sufficing for its own wants, the very dressing, or preparing these productions for fabrication, would furnish employ for multitudes of those idle females ; as well as for many of the lame poor in the county workhouses. And this would diminish the public expence of maintaining those lame and impotent poor.

APPLICATION of the PRECEDING.

And thus hath Common Sense presented you a view of national benefits accruing from a reform of your present municipal government. You are not, however, to consider this as a full enumeration of all those benefits. And still less are you to suppose that the methods here proposed for effecting those national improvements are held forth by the proposer as a regularly digested plan.—No ! He is perfectly

perfectly aware that the plans of individuals will not be necessary to an assembly of legislating representatives chosen in the manner, and acting upon the principles that have been herein before described. And he is also sensible, that until such an assembly shall be formed, no reform of government abuses, or plans for national benefit, will ever be undertaken.

But the aim and intent of the preceding full statement is to convince and satisfy you, first, That your municipal government is at present extremely vicious, and absolutely requires immediate reform; second, That such a reform is not only practicable but easy; and third, That this reform when effected, will be productive of mighty national benefit.

And this conviction, being presumed, is applied as an argument for your adopting that said *sine qua non* measure, which alone can procure you all these national benefits. And assuredly an acquisition of even these benefits, herein before described, is a sufficient argument for your adopting that measure, if none other were to be expected from it.

But the benefits here described are held forth, merely as a specimen or muster of other more mighty savings of national wealth, benefits, and advantages, which must accrue from that same measure, operating in reform of the present numerous and destructively wasteful abuses in your legislative,

gislative, your executive, and financial government. If indeed it can be properly said that there exists here at present any distinction betwixt the administration of these three different branches of government. When the benefits accruing from this last mentioned reform shall be described, then the argument for adopting that said measure, on the principle of national utility, must appear irresistible.

Yet still there is the argument of national necessity, infinitely more urgent for this reform than is that of national utility. For that, *otherwise*, ruin to yourselves and your posterity must inevitably overtake you, and that speedily.—A yearly public expenditure by your government, far exceeding the utmost capacity of your present resources; and that expenditure increasing every year, through fresh debts contracted against you by your government. And on the other hand, an evident moral certainty that, in the short space of two years, probably in much less time, these your present resources will suffer a mighty diminution. What effect must or can ensue from these evidently existing causes, but national insolvency, misery, and ruin?

Your case can admit of no delay; and assuredly it requires no deliberation. For it is impossible that thinking beings, if indeed they can be brought to think at all before direful necessity forces them to feel, should hesitate for a moment in the choice, whether they shall, for the gratification of one or
more

more undeserving individuals, incur certain ruin to themselves and posterity; or whether they shall prevent that ruin, by adopting a measure that is otherwise in itself just, right, honourable, and useful.

Look round and examine whether there exists in nature any medium or alternative, any other means to save you from ruin. Here is not the slightest ground to rely on your old stand by, *the Chapter of Accidents*. And woeful experience for many years past, and for every year as it passes, forbids you to trust for one moment longer to the wisdom or goodness of your government. As little can you trust to its power. For that power, irresistible as it appears to you, because unresisted by you, is confined within the four seas. Across your narrow channel it is despicable imbecility. It cannot influence or controul one single decree of the French National Assembly. Nor can it retard the effect of those decrees for an hour. And it is the effect of those decrees that urges and presses you from without, even more than the wasteful abuses of your government press you within. As your manufactures will speedily experience. And first, as hath been shewn, in a total deprivation of the French market for these manufactures; which you have for some years past wholly engrossed; but which you must soon lose; because the wise and active regulations of the National Assembly will,

in a very short time, enable France to supply herself with those manufactures.

And when the loss of that one important market shall have thrown a multitude of your manufacturers into idleness and the want of employ, do you imagine that these manufacturers will remain with you to starve; or that they will put up with your parish workhouse fare; when they shall come to understand that, at the short distance of three hours sail, they can find comfortable employ, affluence, and respect; with the enjoyment of every right and privilege that appertains to man? The prejudice for the *natale solum* will indeed do much; and will prevail on men to bear much. But, in bearing, there is a *ne plus*. And, when your manufacturers shall have transported your present skill in manufacture, the difference in the price of labour will do the rest.

But emigration, once begun, will not be confined to the manufacturer. The merchant is to the manufacturer what the shadow is to the substance. Nay, to the thinking man of independent fortune, there are certain things dearer than even the *natale solum*. If the enjoyment of his natural rights as a man will not or cannot come to him at home, he will go abroad to enjoy his natural rights, especially when that is to be found so near.

And, when emigration shall have thinned the land, how shall that part of the people which remains

mains support a burden that was too weighty for the united strength of the whole? Actual inability to pay, must unavoidably produce actual insolvency.

Nay it is possible that, even before this actual inability shall arrive, the people, tired out with endless imposition of fresh taxes by their government, may open their eyes to the gross abuse that has been so long practised on them; and resolutely reject these fresh impositions.

Who can without horror look forward to the consequences that must ensue from the desperate rage of an abused, aroused, and incensed people, on either of these events befalling. And that either the one or other of those events must take place soon is most certain; unless you shall prevent it, by putting a speedy stop to the present wasteful, ruinous abuses. You have a recent example of this very nature before your eyes. But you have no reason to expect that a reform, effected by sudden violence, will be so calmly conducted here, or so easily concluded, as it was in that country. There is a mighty difference betwixt the two cases, in a variety of circumstances; and particularly in the degree of abuse committed, and offence given to the people, by existing characters.

The man, who perceives the horizon already darkening with the thick black clouds charged with this mighty storm, must be void of feeling for his country,

country, if he shall not arouse the sleeping crew who, in perfect security, are driving on the public bark with every sail out to certain destruction. In such a situation as ours actually is at this present, there is no time for hesitating or delay. The attempt to delay a reform of abuse is equally mischievous and pernicious as an attempt to prevent it. Not only on account of the many other evils that must attend a violent and hasty reform; but also because it will, by that time, come too late for preventing the subversion of your manufactures and commerce. These must, through such convulsion, be totally driven from you; if indeed they shall not have previously forsaken you. And, when you shall have once lost them, you will never recover them.

When Common Sense looks round, he cannot discover one individual or class of individuals, possessing any thing like property, real or personal, in this country, who can possibly have either interest or inclination to obstruct or even retard a reform of the present abuses. It cannot be the interest of that class styling themselves statesmen who, in and out of office, have hitherto monopolized to themselves the first rank in that basely servile and wicked employ of deceiving, abusing, and plundering you. These days of delusion and plunder are now nearly past; the day of dreadful reckoning approaches fast. And woe be to those of them who shall, on
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that day, be caught in this wicked employ ! Let these behold their brother of France, wandering abroad a despised, detested vagabond, bearing about on his devoted head the curses of a whole nation, in hourly dread of deserved vengeance. And possibly by that time they may not find one remaining despotic court to protect them. On the other hand, Common Sense will venture to prognosticate that he of this class, who shall now stand forward the real honest friend of the people, will soon find himself truly great and respected.

It cannot be for the interest of men possessing landed estates in this country to obstruct a reform of those abuses which, if continued, must subvert our manufactures and commerce. These will surely advert to the consequences resulting to them from such subversion. That, in the first place, it will sink near half the present value of their estates, by depreciating the yearly value of their produce. And that, in the next place, it will greatly enhance the present yearly charge or outgoings from these so depreciated estates, by throwing upon them that burden of taxes, which is at present supported by our yet flourishing manufactures and commerce. Upon this consideration, even these of them who at present receive the wages of corruption, will find they are engaged in a bargain or transaction so very disadvantageous to them that, for every shilling they shall so receive, from this time forward, until the

the day that reform, (if compulsory) shall completely suppress corruption, they will have lost a pound in the value of their estates. Besides the infamy and reproach that must attach to all these who shall have continued till that period to receive such wages, for assisting to betray and ruin their country. For all such receiving will then be deemed wages of that nature, whether taken under the colour of salary for an useless sinecure place and post, or as a downright pension, or in the way of an honorary title. Can these, who accept wages in any shape for such base service, imagine that they shall be held noble or respected, because they bear titles, or expend largely? No! it is such conduct that defeats and undoes honorary titles; rendering the bearers not simply despicable, but odious, and unsufferable under a well-regulated constitution.

And least of all is it the interest of the monied men, or public creditors, to obstruct or delay a reform of the present abuses. As they will perceive from the following true statement of their case, which it becomes necessary to lay before them; because great pains have been taken, and with astonishing success, to deceive the judgement of that powerful and active part of the community, respecting their true interest.

At the time when the government of this country first took upon it to borrow money for its own purposes, on the credit of the people or nation, it

so happened, that at the same time there existed a competition for the crown, betwixt the King who then wore it, and the other who had then lately lost it. And this competition has subsisted ever from that time till of very late, betwixt the heirs or successors of those two original competitors; the people having been so long divided in their opinion about the respective right or title of the said competitors. But those of the people who had lent their money on that public security, adhered unanimously and zealously to him who was in the possession; for this reason, and upon this principle or opinion that, so long as he who had been the borrower should hold possession of the crown, their security for payment was good; and that, on the other hand, if he who was the Pretender should acquire the crown, their security was gone.*

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* This principle or opinion of the public creditors, that the validity of a security, which had been granted to them by the government, rested entirely upon the continued possession of the crown by that King or his heirs who had been the borrowers, and that the Pretender's acquiring the crown would defeat this government security, clearly denotes and marks an actual and real, though tacit, perhaps insensible conviction inherent in the minds of the people, that their real government, by whatever name or names it may be termed, is nothing other than the crown; that the person who wears the crown is, to all intents and purposes, the government; or, in other words, that his will is the measure of government. And so manifest was that afore said opinion of the public creditors respecting their

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security,

This said opinion of the public creditors, that their security for payment rested on the person or the will of him who wore or might wear the crown, became extended and confirmed by a long continued habit of thinking; and hath proved a most convenient foundation for the ministers of corruption in these latter times, whereon to establish their doctrine of passive obedience and non-resistance to the will of the crown or government. And so suc-

security, that the reigning king soon discovered and effectually availed himself of it, by industriously increasing the public debt, together with the number of public creditors, as the certain means of securing to himself the possession of the crown against his competitor. And this was indeed no bad policy in the crown. But it is a melancholy consideration to the people of this country that, about a century ago, a few men, assuming to themselves the name and authority of the whole nation, though assembled without even the wonted formality of popular election, (such as it is) should have vested the person on whom they had bestowed the crown, and his successors, with absolute power or means to borrow whatever money they pleased on the credit of the nation; and at the same time made it the natural interest of that person and his successors to contract as much debt as they could against the nation. A slight attention to these circumstances will partly account for the present immensity of the national debt; as also for the astonishing alacrity of the British government to engage the nation in war. Though, besides the above, all governments possessing unlimited power of making war, have numberless inducements to be perpetually engaged in war; because, in that situation, the government draws the whole profit, whilst the people bear all the loss.

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cessful have their endeavours proved that, at this day, if government should say, "*eat straw*," the public creditors would eat straw, and would study to prevail on all others to eat it with them. Left, by opposing the will or deranging the measures of government, whatever these measures may be, they should shake their own security for payment.

And, so long as the public creditors shall entertain this opinion, the bare mentioning a reform of government abuses, will fill their minds with horror. But a slight attention to the following considerations will clearly convince these public creditors, that a voluntary or optional reform of the present abuses, instead of shaking or disturbing their security, will convert that which is at present an ideal or imaginary security into a really substantial and perpetual security. And farther that, unless they shall unanimously concur in such a reform, they will very soon have neither substance nor shadow of security for payment.

For, on the one hand, supposing that such a voluntary reform should not take place, but that the body of people, passively submitting to the will of government, shall suffer matters to go on as they now do; still the people's submitting will not alter the actual nature of their situation; nor can it alter, prevent, or retard the effect that existing causes must, by the immutable order of nature, operate on human affairs. And therefore their so submit-

ting, though it must prevent a voluntary or optional reform, yet is it more than probable that it will not long prevent an extorted and violent reform, produced through either the one or other of those two events before mentioned; that is, either by an actual inability in the people to furnish the calls of government; or otherwise by a want of will in at least a part of the people to longer answer the perpetually-increasing demands of government. And, amongst the other consequences ensuing from either of those events, a sudden stop to the payment of your interest must be one.

Nay, even supposing that the people should for ever submit to the will of government, without once attempting to remedy themselves, yet cannot government, with that unresisted power, draw from the people that which the decay of manufacture and commerce, emigration, with other causes, will have disabled the people to pay. It is a trite saying, that "*Where it is not, there the king must lose his due.*" And, when the king or government shall fail of receiving their full claim or due from the people, then must some of the claimants fail of receiving their due from government.

Now you are sensible that government is the common paymaster of your annual interest, as well as of its own wants or expences, out of the monies

monies which it draws from the people for those common purposes. And you are farther sensible that government, being this common paymaster, will be careful to pay its own wants first; as also, that, in the event of public deficiency and consequent discontent, the ordinary wants of government must be greatly enhanced by the extraordinary necessity of supporting itself by its wonted means. And therefore you are or may be assured that, whensoever any deficiency in the receipts of government shall happen, from whatever cause that may be, all such deficiency in the government receipts must fall upon you, and produce a proportionate deduction from the full payment of your yearly interest.

This you will admit to be a fair state of your present security for payment, so far as it respects the good faith or disposition of your present paymaster, government, to pay you.

And, on the other hand, supposing an unanimous concurrence of the people, including the public creditors, in reforming or putting a stop to the present ruinous abuses of government, through the before-mentioned natural, rational, and easy means of an actual, real, and true legislative representation of themselves. Now mark the alteration that such a reform will create in the state of your security for payment, so far as that respects the good faith of your paymaster. Instead of relying totally, as at present, on the sole faith of a
government

government so situated as that it will (because it can and soon must) stop the payment of your yearly interest; you would, in the case of such a reform, obtain the faith or security of the whole nation; firmly and irrevocably pledged to you, through an assembly of representatives, returned by the free, uninfluenced choice of the whole body of people, acting under the sole authority and controul of the people, and therefore speaking the true sense and voice of the people. A faith or security that would dure so long as the nation itself should dure: and which would be ever respected, in preference to even its own wants. *

But, besides the *good faith* of your paymaster, there is to you another consideration, still more important; which is the *ability* of your actual debtor

* When the pecuniary distresses of France compelled their government to assemble the Notables, which afterwards produced the National Assembly, the stop that had been then put to the payment of the public creditors would have been continued perpetual, had it not been for the reform of government abuses effected by that Assembly. Whereas these public creditors have now obtained a security, in which the whole nation has joined. And, through that reform of abuses, the nation hath become enabled to not only pay the interest regularly to the public creditors, but also to *really and bona fide* discharge a part of the principal debt. Whilst, at the same time, the people are relieved from the burden of various taxes, that were the most oppressive to them, and the most injurious to manufacture and commerce.

to pay you. Now you are sensible that the nation is your actual and only debtor ; having been constituted such by its government. For that *this government, notwithstanding it has constituted itself your only paymaster,* will not pay you a shilling out of its own separate purse, however well filled that separate purse may be, and richly stored out of the national purse. Therefore you have alone to consider the present and future ability of the nation to continue your payment.

And, in order to ascertain the difference betwixt the degree of national ability to pay the public creditors under a continuation of the present management, and that degree of ability which the nation would possess in case of such a reform ; we have only to take a slight glance at the sum total of that yearly pecuniary expence which the nation is subjected to at present by her government, and to compare that sum with the amount of national expence which, in the case of reform, could and would suffice yearly.

The first part of the present *ordinary* national expence, is the sum that *government* admits to be received by it yearly from the nation net into *his Majesty's Exchequer* ; being about seventeen millions sterling. Of which sum *government* expends about seven millions yearly on what it terms the necessary expences of government : and the residue goes to pay the yearly interest of the national debt.

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But on extraordinary occasions, that is, when *government* chuses to engage the nation in a war, then that above-mentioned sum of seventeen millions has been greatly more than doubled, every year, during the time that *government* has thought fit to continue such war.

But, besides this sum so admitted to be received net into *his Majesty's Exchequer*, there are very large sums drawn yearly out of the nation's purse by *government* and its officers; and which sums, though actually paid by the nation, cannot be ascertained; because a great part of them are not (indeed cannot be) brought to any account; but are sunk invisibly in the present extravagant and oppressive mode of collecting the public revenue; in enormous fees, perquisites, and emoluments of *government* offices; and in a variety of other shapes. But all these sums, though paid in this invisible and unascertained manner, affect the national commerce and manufacture, and consequently the national purse, equally as doth the above-mentioned sum admitted to be received net into *his Majesty's Exchequer*. And this said unascertained national expence may, upon a moderate computation, be estimated at four millions sterling yearly, in ordinary times. On the aforesaid extraordinary occasions this expence is proportionally increased.

And, to these sums, we must add that other sum which, as hath been shown, is drawn yearly out

out of the nation's purse, to the amount of seven millions sterling, through the present management of the municipal government.

So that the whole amount of the present national expence, or of the sums that are drawn yearly out of the nation's purse by means of its government, may be reckoned about twenty-eight millions sterling, in ordinary times.

Whereas, on the supposition of a reform, there would be saved to the nation, out of this present expence, First, that whole sum of seven millions so drawn and wasted by the present municipal management; but which, in the case of a reform, would be completely saved to the community, by the methods that have been pointed out. And, second, there might be saved out of the present expenditure on that said wasteful oppressive mode of collecting the revenue, on unnecessary posts, places, pensions, fees or emoluments of office, and other purposes of government, which are not simply unnecessary, but pernicious and destructive to the national welfare, a sum equal to, at least, four millions sterling. And these two sums, making together eleven millions, being so saved to the nation, would reduce the present national expenditure of twenty-eight millions, to seventeen millions yearly.

It would be an insult on the understanding of the public creditors to doubt their readily per-

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ceiving that the national ability of regularly continuing the payment of their interest would be wonderfully extended and confirmed by such a reduction of the yearly national expenditure, from twenty-eight millions, to seventeen millions.

Another important consideration, on this head of future national ability to pay the public creditors their interest is, that a parliamentary reform, such as hath been proposed, would prevent all future accumulation of the national debt; by putting an effectual stop to those ruinously expensive wars, in which the nation hath been hitherto perpetually engaged by her present government.

And a slight attention to these several considerations will clearly convince the public creditors that their particular interest is more deeply concerned in promoting a reform of the present government abuses, than is that of any one other part of the community.

Respecting the military part of this community, it happens fortunately that our soldiers are all citizens, and none of them foreign mercenaries. And, notwithstanding these have been hitherto taught to look only at that hand through which their pay passes to them, yet will they readily reflect that not a shilling of this pay comes from the paymaster, but entirely from their country. And, upon such reflection they will, instead of obstructing, zealously concur in promoting a measure that

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will rescue themselves from tyrannical oppression, and their country from ruin and misery.

As to the remaining part of the community, who feel all the evils of insupportable taxes and intolerable oppression, without even tasting the wages of corruption; who pay all to and receive nothing from the present government, these will readily and unanimously concur in promoting this necessary reform, which will relieve them from such a burthen of taxes.

Who are there then in this community that can have either interest or inclination to obstruct a reform of abuse? There can exist no such beings, saving a few who, possessing no property real or personal in this country, subsist entirely by the wages of corruption, paid them for the base service of deluding and deceiving their fellow citizens, by their pamphlets, their public speeches, and private declamations. These are the vile vermin bred in the putrid sores of a corrupted body politic; and these will indeed exert themselves to prevent a reform, because, when that corruption on which they feed shall be purged away by reform, they must lose their existence. But these will soon be deprived of their present capacity to do mischief. The first ray of reason darting on the mind of the people will discover the loathsome quality of these vermin: and they will then be abhorred and shunned.

And, as it is thus manifestly the interest of the whole people (those few vermin excepted) to promote a reform of the present ruinous abuses, it might be naturally concluded that the whole people would concur in adopting it.—And so they would, if they did perceive or understand their own real interest.

But there are in this state those who consider the power of governing to be no power, unless upon the terms of *Sic volo, sic jubeo*, without limitation or restraint. And these, being conscious that the duration of their present unlimited power depends entirely upon the voice or consent of the people, and consequently that the people will, upon discovering their own true interest, immediately put an end to that grossly-abused unlimited power, they employ the before-mentioned vermin, with every base means of corruption and falsehood, to hold the people in ignorance, to delude, deceive, and mislead them respecting their own real interest.

The aim and object of this publication is to undeceive the people on that head. And it is equally the interest and duty of every individual in this community, as of Common Sense, to exert himself in endeavouring to counteract and defeat these wicked delusive schemes and contrivances for perpetuating that unlimited power of governing; the
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gross and shameless abuse of which hath brought the national interest into the present ruinous situation; and which, if not speedily arrested, will completely accomplish that ruin.

Parliamentary reform hath been long talked of as necessary to the reform of abuses. But the parliamentary reforms hitherto proposed have been all of the mongrel kind, a sort of half-breed, through an unnatural connection or compromise between despotism and freedom. Such compromised parliamentary reforms will never reform the present abuses of government; nor prevent that ruin which must ensue from those abuses: they would only serve to procrastinate; and thereby render that ruin more complete. The Reason of every man must convince him that the only effectual parliamentary reform must be founded upon the principles of representation that have been herein before described: and that all other species of parliamentary reform or of representation is a mere mockery, a continuation of deception and delusion, which must terminate in national ruin.

The *Vox Populi* can readily, speedily, and easily, without disturbance, opposition, or confusion, effect this complete and only efficacious parliamentary reform. For who shall dare to oppose the *Vox Populi* which, when either unanimous or nearly unanimous, is as irresistible by man, as is the voice
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of God. And it is from the *Vox Populi* alone that such a parliamentary reform is to be expected.

For only the most extreme folly and weakness can expect that such a parliamentary reform will ever come from those who at present possess a voice or share in the powers that are. Mere passiveness, or an acquiescence in such a reform, is the utmost that can be looked for from them; and even that should be considered a sort of patriotic sacrifice. But it would be madness to expect that they should themselves be the sacrificing priests; or that they should by their own vote deprive themselves of a property which either they, or their patrons under whom they hold it, have purchased for a valuable consideration. Whether the purchase has been made *bona fide* or *mala fide* could never stand an argument with them, they being the only judges; the only object in their view must be that a valuable consideration had been paid by them or their patrons for a purchase which they were then called upon to yield up by their own vote. At any rate you may rest assured that, if you shall wait for a parliamentary reform, until it shall come to you through the act or vote of these who at present hold a voice or share in the powers that are, you must wait until your present government can draw no more money out of you.

Still less ground of expectation have you from
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any of these would-be ministers or statesmen who, when out of office, promise you parliamentary reforms and every thing else you can ask for ; but who, when through your help they have got into office, find things very well as they are, and do not wish them to be better.

But it must appear to uncorrupted human reason (that is, to the Reason of every man who exists without the vortex of our government corruption) the most astonishing of all monstrous absurdities, that the people of Great Britain should apply to or depend upon any man, or any set of men, for obtaining that which is their own, by natural and inherent right ; which is not barely useful, but indispensably necessary to them ; and which is so completely and easily within their own power, that the moment they shall will it should be so, it must be so. If the truth of this is doubted by you, my fellow-citizens, or by any part of you, or by any one individual besides, a very little more time will prove the fact to your woeful experience. For, in case you shall not now voluntarily exert yourselves, with the spirit of men, or rational beings, direful necessity will soon force you to feel, feeling will force you to exert yourselves, and that exertion will incontestably convince you and all mankind that it ever was easily within your power, at any and at all times, to arrest and reform the oppression

sion and abuse of your government which, by that time, will have ruined you.

It must be the fervent prayer of every Briton, who sees and feels for his country, that this dear-bought experience may be prevented by a timely exertion of the people. Seeing that, besides the confusion, distraction, and outrages that must attend a reform effected by popular rage and resentment, which never yet did things well, reform will then come too late. It will be like "Shutting the door after the steed is stolen." For your Reason, in defiance of government corruption, must convince each and all of you that France, being now nearly lightened of her former oppressive weight, and completely released from all her clogs and fetters, will speedily recover the ground you had gained on her, in the race for manufacturing and commercial wealth, during the time she had stopped to knock off these fetters. She will then easily pass and distance you, loaded as you are with your present intolerable burden, and impeded by galling fetters. And, having once possessed herself of the rich prize, she will never afford you the opportunity of again contesting it with her.

But prayers to Heaven will not effect this necessary reform. We have no right to expect a miraculous interposition of Heaven to effect that which can be effected so easily by the natural and ordinary

Ordinary causes it has instituted; even by a slight exertion of that reason, which Heaven has bestowed upon men, for the purpose of enabling them to distinguish the difference between truth and falsehood, between good and evil; and to guide them in chusing between those two opposites.

And, as it is the duty of every man who sees, to lead or direct his neighbour who is blind; so is it the duty of every individual in this community, who sees and perceives what is so necessary for the good of the whole, to undeceive and instruct his deluded or less enlightened neighbour; to the end that the whole people may speedily and unanimously concur to effect that which, through such unanimity, will be accomplished with perfect ease, with complete good order, and calm, deliberate consideration. For it is the want of unanimity alone, caused by government deception and corruption, that can occasion the smallest delay, confusion, or opposition to this *ultimately unavoidable* parliamentary reform.

And let not any one, the lowest individual in this community, suffer himself to be deluded into sluggish inaction, on this pressing occasion; either by the deceitful representations of others, or of his own indolence, "That he is of too little consequence to meddle in these great matters," and "What can one poor individual do?"—Every

one individual is an integral part of this whole community : that whole is composed of individuals. The lowest individual holds an equal share in the common or national stock, as any one other the greatest individual. The lowest has his *all* at stake ; the greatest can have no more. The *all* of the lowest is of equal value to him, as his *all* can be to the greatest. And therefore in a question that so imminently concerns the common good and safety, of not only the whole present generation, but of all future generations, the lowest individual holds equal right to a voice on that question, as doth the greatest. It is equally the interest and equally the duty of that lowest to exert his right ; and his individual voice will tell for as much on such a question, as will the voice of the greatest.

These are not levelling principles. They are the principles of Eternal Reason. They are Eternal Truths. And, notwithstanding the rule, " That truth is not to be spoken at all times," yet, on an occasion of such urgent necessity, when *Ruin* stares the nation in the face, and will certainly and speedily seize her unless the truth shall be told, it becomes a crime in any and every one citizen, who can serve the common cause by speaking the truth, to hold his peace.—When once we shall have secured ourselves from *Ruin*, then may we, in safety, return to ceremony ; and to the etiquette

quette of distinction, rank, and title. But, upon this great question, all affectation of distinction is absurd nonsense and folly; nay it is an outrage and offence against human reason, as well as the common good.

On this head, Common Sense has only to again inculcate on you, my fellow-citizens, that all half or compromised parliamentary reforms will turn out mere delusion. And that all partial reforms of abuse (as all such reforms undertaken, or pretended to be undertaken under the present management, will turn out to be) are mere delusion; calculated to continue the present unlimited power of completing your ruin.—The first, the last, and the only thing you have to do, and the only thing that can save you from ruin, is to speedily and unanimously concur in adopting a full and complete parliamentary reform, grounded on the principles of representation that have been here described. That representation being once established, will, *under your own controul*, honestly, faithfully, and completely do all the rest for you.

CONCLUSION.

AND thus hath Common Sense laid before you such arguments for your speedily adopting a

complete parliamentary reform, as arise from the consideration of national utility and of national necessity.

Another argument to the same effect is, the consideration of national dignity, or the dignity of human nature concerned in you aggregately and individually, as beings endowed with reason; and, as such, holding a natural right to be treated, by those who govern you, with due respect to your understanding and to your feelings as men. Whether you are and have been governed with that due respect, the world and yourselves can judge. For this is a subject of too great delicacy to be enlarged on by Common Sense with moderation, and at the same time with truth.

But there still remains one other argument, for your speedily adopting this measure; which, with rationally reflecting beings, ought to act more forcibly than even all the others. That is a consideration of the situation in which you will place your posterity, through your now neglecting to adopt it. You have irrevocably bound your posterity to the payment of near ten millions sterling yearly, for the interest of a debt contracted mostly by the present generation; a great part of it indeed in the present reign. An unnaturally cruel legacy for parents to bequeath their children! But, in the case that you shall suffer yourselves, and consequently your children, to be despoiled of
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those manufactures and commerce, which have hitherto alone enabled you to support that burden, you will treat these your children with greater cruelty than Pharaoh is said to have treated the Israelites, by compelling them to make brick without straw. And yet this is the situation in which you will irretrievably place your posterity, if you shall now neglect to adopt that necessary reform.

Whereas, by speedily and unanimously concurring in that measure, you will not only secure those manufactures and commerce to yourselves and your posterity; but by so greatly diminishing your present national expenditure, through the same measure, you will be enabled to considerably diminish that heavy burden of debt, even in your own generation. And you will farther be enabled, under the same measure, but not otherwise, to create a richly valuable accession of domestic territory, by means of that public undertaking which hath been here proposed and described, for cultivating your present useless barren lands. Besides that by the same public undertaking you will rid yourselves and your posterity of those numberless thieves and beggars, which, under your present form of government, have ever been a ruinous nuisance to this community. There are many other important national benefits, that would result

felt to you and your posterity from that reform, too tedious to recapitulate.

Above all things you will, by adopting that measure, procure for yourselves, and leave to your posterity, that which your fathers did not leave to you, *a rational and free Constitution*, that will ever completely protect and secure you, with your posterity, from the rapacity and oppression of government. And, by procuring for them such a constitution, you will atone for the injury you have done, in burthening them with that enormous debt.

But if you shall now slight the voice of Reason soliciting you to save yourselves and your posterity from ruin; and shall persist in the same supine, passive, and servile submission, to feed the rapacity and ambition of your government with the whole resources accruing from your manufactures and commerce; thereby enabling it to harraßs yourselves and disturb the whole world around with perpetual wars; then the sooner that you and your government shall be despoiled of these so perniciously applied resources, the better it will be for all the rest of mankind; nay the better it will be for yourselves.

APPENDIX.

The Origin of the English Poor System—and the Motives of Government for first instituting that System.

IT is universally known that this English Poor system was first instituted towards the latter end of Queen Elizabeth's reign. For that the statute the 43 Eliz. is the first that enacts and prescribes a public provision for the idle, unemployed poor; with particular regulations for that provision. And this said statute has ever since continued to be the fundamental regulating law of the English Poor system. All the numerous subsequent statutes on that head having been merely auxiliary, or explanatory of this said 43 Eliz.

And we must observe here, *in limine*, that this necessity for so many aiding and explaining statutes, together with the contradictory, perplexed expression of those statutes, producing daily clashing in opinion between the several justices of the peace, who administer this same Poor system; and between those justices of the peace and the judges in the Court of King's Bench, to whom all such differences are ultimately referred; nay the contradictory opinions that have been delivered by different judges of that same Court, upon cases in this system exactly

exactly similar in every one circumstance, furnish the most convincing general proof, that the principle of this said system must be somehow altogether faulty and absurd.

The reason assigned by government for first instituting this Poor system, by that statute 43 Eliz. is, that the idle, unemployed poor had, towards that period, become very numerous, discontented, and likely to prove troublesome and dangerous to government. And this was indeed the true reason for then enacting that said poor law.

But the cause that is at this day assigned and universally received why the poor became thus idle, unemployed, numerous, and dangerous to government at that period, is not the true cause. But, on the contrary, is a gross mistake; which it becomes necessary to here correct and rectify.

For the cause so assigned and received at present is, the dissolution of the monasteries in England. As if those dissolved monasteries had, ever till the 43 Eliz. maintained all the idle, unemployed poor in England. Whereas the truth is, that these monasteries had been dissolved near to seventy years before the 43 Eliz. And we hear nothing of this discontented and dangerous poor existing, till at most the 38 Eliz.

But we clearly understand, from the practice of those numerous monasteries which still exist at this day in other countries, that the only maintenance or
relief

relief ever afforded to the poor in England by those dissolved monasteries, must have consisted in an optional distribution, by each monastery, of that broken meat and offals which ever exist in large societies, to the lame and impotent poor in its respective neighbourhood. But the lame and impotent were not the poor which, about that period, appeared dangerous to government. And, at any rate, the withdrawing that monastic relief, being such as is described, could not have thrown a numerous discontented poor upon the public. Though, this same monastic relief, whatever it was, having been withdrawn about seventy years before the 43 Eliz. we must upon that and every possible consideration necessarily conclude that the dissolution of the monasteries in England was not the cause that the idle, unemployed poor had towards the 43 Eliz. become so very numerous, discontented, and dangerous to government, as to occasion that necessity of enacting this said poor provision law. And therefore we must find another cause for it.

The true and real cause that the idle, unemployed poor, or labouring commonalty, had become so numerous and dangerous to government towards the 43 Eliz. was the following innovation in the disposition and conduct of the English nation, which had taken place towards that period. Ever till about that time the English had attended solely to agriculture, and the improvements of their lands.

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They had so totally neglected navigation and commerce, and also manufacture, that they employed the Easterlings to transport even their raw wool to the continent, where it was manufactured.—But the rich discoveries then lately made by Spain in the new world, inspired the English, as well as other nations, with a desire to share in those discoveries. And the war that broke out with Spain, early in Queen Elizabeth's reign, had compelled the English to apply, in their own defence, to navigation. This spirit was farther promoted, by the opportunity presented through that war, of intercepting those riches of Spain in their passage from America to Europe. And the success of those first adventurers so encouraged others that, by the middle of this reign, the rage for discovery, naval enterprise, and commerce had completely seized the English nation, and entirely changed their former disposition and conduct. Agriculture became at once totally neglected. The nobles, and men of large estates, pledged their lands for money to engage in those naval adventures.—Of course the cultivation of their estates, and particularly the breaking in of their waste lands, was altogether intermitted and laid aside.

This sudden and general intermission of agriculture necessarily threw into idleness and the want of employ multitudes of the labouring commonalty, who till then had, by their earnings in that species
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of employ, maintained themselves and their families. And this deprivation of their wonted employ and subsistence was the true cause that such numbers of the labouring commonalty became, about this period, idle, unemployed, and discontented. And these, being able-bodied men, appeared dangerous to government.

Despotic governments which can, without feeling or remorse, plunge their subjects, whom they consider and treat as their slaves, or indeed as their cattle, into all the horrors of foreign wars, and send them abroad to be slaughtered by thousands, for the most trivial cause, perhaps for no cause, are all over feeling at the appearance of domestic insurrection, disturbance, or bloodshed. Because this, like the mutiny on board a ship, brings danger and trouble home to their own persons.

Therefore, as soon as that discontent of a numerous strong bodied poor presented to Queen Elizabeth's government the appearance of danger from a cause, which, if not removed, threatened to increase, that government determined to completely secure itself from this danger, by for ever removing the cause thereof.

And assuredly that said statute, the 43 Eliz. was a device the most completely effectual that could be contrived, for perfectly securing the then government against danger, and even against trouble or inconvenience.

For the arbitrary despotic regulations of that statute, compelling each parish distinctly to provide meat, drink, cloathing, lodging, and all other necessities, for every one idle person within that parish, who should chuse to apply for it, completely cut off all cause of discontent, and consequently of danger to government, from the then idle, unemployed poor. More especially as these idle poor were restrained, by this parish regulation, from wandering about, or assembling in bodies.

But this government, which was thus curiously attentive to the security of its own despotic power, and even its ease and convenience, sacrificed without remorse the most important interests of the people to these considerations. For, by this parish work-house regulation, all these unemployed poor were placed in a state of absolute uselessness, totally lost to the state. And, whilst the wealthy and industrious part of the community received no kind of return for the expence that was caused to them by this regulation; these unemployed poor, instead of receiving any benefit or comfort from that expence, felt themselves thereby stripped of all that little self consequence, that pleasing consciousness of rational dignity, which the contemplation of reciprocal utility furnishes to the mind of the lowest individual in society, who feels himself capable of being thus useful. They soon found themselves degraded

degraded to a state of useless, despicable, and slavish dependence on extorted charity.

Whereas if, instead of thus absurdly converting those unemployed agricultors into useless slavish manufacturers of flax, hemp, thread, wool, iron, and other wares and stuff, in parish work-houses, under the tyranny of overseers annually changed, the then government had ordered that all those unemployed labourers should have been again restored to their wonted situation and employ, by setting them to cultivate, for the benefit of the public, those waste and barren lands, that had then lately been deserted by the private owners, for wages to be paid them, out of those very monies which that statute compelled the public to pay for maintaining those same poor in absolute idleness; then, and in that case, would the public have received a return, that would have been nearly adequate to their expence; and the unemployed discontented poor would have been replaced in a state of useful, comfortable independence. But such a measure would have clashed with the ease, the convenience, and the despotic purposes of government.

But notwithstanding the wealthy part of the community, accustomed to the yoke, and equally afraid as government of popular disturbance, did passively submit to the absurd, tyrannical, and oppressive regulations of this said statute, the unemployed poor did not so tamely acquiesce

quiesce in their part of it. These soon expressed their dissatisfaction. And, in a little time after, namely about the beginning of the next reign, they broke out into open insurrection in two counties, under Reynolds, surnamed Captain Pouch. And imagining that the then new undertaking of enclosing lands had contributed to the loss of their wonted employ, they vented their indignation on those enclosures. They were indeed soon overpowered by government, supported by all the wealthy. But this insurrection, with the declarations of the insurgents, furnish a clear concurring proof, that the cause herein before assigned, was the real and actual cause of that great increase and dangerous discontent of the idle, unemployed poor, towards the 43 Eliz. As also that these same idle, unemployed poor were far from being satisfied with the nature of that provision made for them by this said statute.

And such was the origin of this your Poor system. And such were the views and motives of your government for first instituting it.

The process of the Parish Provision, and Poors' Settlement Regulation.

This is the process of that parish regulation. The idly disposed person, who means to throw himself a burden upon the parish, makes oath before the nearest justice of the peace, that he is poor,

or impotent, or not able to provide for himself and his family; that he belongs to such parish; and that he had been refused relief by the overseers thereof. And thereupon this said justice is compelled, by the law, to summon before him these overseers, to shew cause why they have refused the demanded relief. And as the overseers cannot, in this stage of the business, traverse the pauper's oath, they are immediately compelled, by an order of the same justice, to maintain and provide for that pauper and his family, till otherwise ordered according to law.

The only remedy of this parish is, to examine the pauper's right to settlement there; and whether he may not, according to the law, have a better right to settlement in some other parish. And as the vestry clerk is commonly the oracle on these examinations; and being himself a dabbler in the law, is keen for the management of a parish lawsuit, it would be strange if, amongst the many contradictory statutes on parish settlements, he could not find out some flaw in the pauper's title to settlement in that parish, and his better title to settlement in some other parish. Upon this discovery immediate application is made by those overseers to two justices of the peace, for an examination of the pauper's title before them. And it is rarely difficult to obtain, from those two justices, an adjudication of the pauper's better right to settlement in
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the other parish; together with an order for delivering over this pauper and his family to the overseers of that said other parish; who by virtue of the same order are obliged to receive and maintain him, till otherwise ordered according to law.

The legal remedy of this other parish is by appeal against the order of removal, before the justices of the county at their next quarter sessions. Of which appeal notice being usually given to the removing parish, the two contending parishes appear before the quarter sessions, by their counsel learned in the law. And, which ever way the appeal goes, a case is seldom refused by the justices, if required by the losing parish. Which case carries the cause before the justices of the King's Bench at Westminster. Where this important, inexplicable and unintelligible cause is argued by two or more of the most eminent counsel at the bar, for each parish, fee'd at an enormous expence.

It most commonly happens that the order of quarter sessions is quashed by the Court of King's Bench. So that this pauper and his family may be removed backward and forward, from one extremity of the kingdom to the other, at a prodigious expence to these contending parishes. And when the bill of charges, for litigating this single pauper's right of settlement, consisting of the charges in removing, the overseer's personal charge, and the attorney's bill of costs for himself and agent,
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with counsels fees at the quarter sessions, and Court of King's Bench, shall be delivered in, the whole charge to each parish may exceed one hundred and fifty pounds.

Nay possibly the dispute about that one pauper's settlement may not terminate here. For the losing parish may afterwards discover that some third parish is more legally subject to the pauper's settlement. In which case exactly such another process may be renewed.

Such are the effects of this parish provision and poors settlement regulation. And, amongst other considerations, this one naturally suggests itself. That if the maintaining one single pauper is held such a grievance that, for the bare chance of escaping it, two parishes shall chuse each to incur the expence of one hundred and fifty pounds, the maintaining so many thousand of these paupers must needs be to the community a most insufferable grievance.

The Origin and present State of the English Government.

The Saxons, our progenitors, who first landed in Britain, were all soldiers; engaged in a military enterprize; first to assist, then to attack the former inhabitants, and wrest from them their possessions. It required about one hundred and seventy years to accomplish this enterprize. And, during all

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that time, the only government of these Saxons was necessarily of a nature merely military. Because, not only the success of the enterprize, but the safety of all these who formed that community depended upon a strict observance of military discipline; which consists in a perfect subordination, or prompt passive obedience of the soldiers to the authority of their officers, and of these officers to the general or commander in chief. And, of course, the general possessed, during that whole time, all and every possible power of government, in a degree that was altogether unlimited; not only in such matters as were merely military, but in every matter of distributive justice. All the other Saxons who afterwards landed in this island, whether they came under distinct and independent chiefs, or whether it was to join any of the former chiefs, were all, through the same cause, governed upon the same principles that have been here mentioned. Consequently the original government of the British Saxons was altogether military. And it would seem that, through the very same cause, all the governments on this earth have been originally founded on the very same principles.

Afterwards when, upon the subjugation of the former inhabitants, military enterprize in some sort ceased amongst the Saxons; and thereupon their situation became in some degree altered from that of soldiers to citizens, the form of government to which

which they had been so long habituated, underwent little or no change; saving in the name or appellation of the different ranks or classes. The commanders in chief, who had before been kings as well as generals, now assumed the title of kings only; still retaining however all the original power that had been exercised by the generals. The great officers were called barons; and still formed the great council to the King, as they had formerly been to the general. And the soldiers became villains; equally subordinate to the authority of the King and barons, as they had formerly been to that of the general and officers.

Nevertheless this despotic military government held so much regard to the good of the people, that it indulged them in holding their public popular assemblies of various kinds. Where they were allowed to deliberate and propose regulations for their own good order, in every thing relating to their mutual intercourse, and for preserving the peace amongst themselves; but in nothing that related to the public or general government. That was solely directed by the king; assisted by his aforesaid great council of the barons. In particular, for the purpose of promoting and preserving the peace and good order of the people, they were permitted, by a writ from the King, to chuse from amongst themselves certain municipal magistrates, termed conservators of the peace; who, being

thus chosen by the people, and returned to the King, received his commission, to act with full power, in keeping the peace, executing the laws, preventing the commission of crimes, and maintaining good order. And it is said that, under this magistracy, the public good order was maintained in an excellent manner.

Thus matters were conducted under the Saxon government; and the Norman conquest, though it was far from adding to the privileges of the people, yet made no alteration in that municipal magistracy.

It was in the year 1327, commonly called the first of Edward the Third, though then no king, that this privilege of chusing their own conservators of the peace was first wrested from the people, and seized by the crown, on the following occasion. Young Edward, then a minor, returning from France, with his vicious mother, and her paramour Mortimer, imprisoned his father Edward the Second; and, meaning to formally depose him, Mortimer assembled a parliament packed for that purpose. But, apprehending opposition from the people, whose minds began to waver; and particularly from those conservators of the peace, then acting under the commission of Edward the Second; this Mortimer, who entering the house of parliament with a band of armed ruffians could threaten the members with instant death if they should

should oppose his will, took upon him to dismiss, in the name of parliament, all the conservators of the peace: and, without allowing to the people their wonted privilege of chusing new conservators, he himself appointed certain of his own partizans to that office.

And in this manner were the people despoiled of that privilege, which they had enjoyed for so many centuries, to chuse their own conservators of the peace. The barons, who felt no inconvenience from this usurpation of the crown, gave themselves no concern about it: and the people, accustomed to the subordination of villains, seem to have silently acquiesced.

What hath been here said, respecting the original government of the British or Anglo Saxons, relates entirely to your present municipal government. It may be proper however to add, that this account of the Saxon government differs a little from that account given by certain learned and ingenious Whigs; who, in their controversies with the Tories, finding nothing in our present system of government like to a free constitution, looked back for such a constitution under the Saxon system of government. Their disquisitions are collected by Mr. Millar, the learned professor of Glasgow; who, after endeavouring to torture the Saxon word *Wittes*, and the Latin words *Procuratores, et magnus concursus populi*, at their Witte-nagemotes,

nagemotes, into something that could carry the resemblance of a free constitution, is forced to conclude, " That the Anglo Saxon government
 " was not calculated to secure the liberty and the
 " natural rights of mankind."

But if these ingenious Whigs meant, by their disquisitions, to discover a precedent under the Saxon system, whereon to found a right in the British people to a free constitution, they bestowed their pains to very little purpose. The truth is that they, with the majority of mankind, make no distinction betwixt *Precedent* and *Rule*; whereas there are no two things in nature more different. *Precedents* are founded on and drawn from the practice or opinions of *Men*; which are fallible, subject to error, and in fact oftener wrong than right. *Rule* is founded on *Nature, Eternal Reason, and the due Order of Things*; which are infallible, subject to no error, consequently never wrong. And therefore, in any case where there exists an applicable *Rule* so founded on Nature and Reason, for men to look about for a *Precedent* to guide that case, is folly; to substitute *Precedent* instead of that *Rule* (when they differ) is error; but to oppose *Precedents* against that *Rule*, can only be the wicked act of designing men, basely disposed to promote some evil and unjust purpose.

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In the formation of human government there does exist a guiding Rule, founded on Nature, Eternal Reason, and the due Order of Things; which has been ever known to, and ever admitted by all civilized mankind, in all ages; though never carried into practice till of very late. This universally-known and admitted Rule in human government is the *Salus Populi*, the good of the people governed; and that Rule is, and ever ought to be, the only guide in the formation of all governments. It is also the ever-standing measure and standard, whereby all governments, that are already formed and do exist, should be frequently and carefully examined and tried. And whenever it shall be found that the existing government varies or differs from this standard, that difference should immediately be corrected; so as that the whole government should be rendered completely conformable to this said standard.

The next point is, who are to be the triers or examiners of government. And, at any rate, that cannot be the existing government itself, or the persons concerned in the administration thereof: because that government, or the administration of it, is the very subject that is to be tried. The people governed are alone competent, and alone entitled by Nature, by Reason, and the due Order of Things, to examine the present state of their government, and the conduct of those
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who administer it ; first, because the power of governing is originally derived from the people, who on that account are paramount to government ; and second, because the good of the people being the ultimate and only end of government, they alone are qualified to judge whether that end is accomplished by the present government. And this act of so examining the state of their government is not only a right inherent in the people, but it is a duty they owe to themselves, to the dignity of human nature in general, and to their own reason in particular. Also that duty of so examining becomes incumbent on the people, at least once in every generation ; because, notwithstanding a government may have been originally formed according to that before-mentioned standard of the *Salus Populi*, and may also have been long conducted so, yet that same government may, through the conduct of those who then administer it, have become suddenly or of late extremely vicious and noxious to the people. And to say that, in such a case, the people have not a right to stop this noxious administration, and to rectify and restore their government to the foregoing standard, is to contradict the surest principles of Right Reason, of Nature, and of Eternal Justice. It is affirming that the people were made for the service of the existing government, be it ever so vicious ; instead of all governments being made

made for the people. It is affirming that the Creator exists for the service of its creature. And that is, in religion, impious blasphemy ; in human government, it is the absurd nonsense of tyranny and despotism, by whatever sophistry it may be disguised. And this right of the people to correct recent faults or errors of government, extends equally to faults or errors of long standing. So soon as these faults shall be discovered, the generation that discovers them has a right to correct and remedy them ; without regarding the antiquity or long standing of the error ; and without regarding the precedent of the last or any number of generations, which may have been erroneous ; but regarding alone that infallible standard of human government, the *Salus Populi*.

But, besides the duty that every generation of the people owe to themselves, they owe it as a duty to their children of the next generation, whose natural guardians they are, to examine the present state and conduct of their government, and to rectify what is amiss in it, by the foregoing standard.

But the curious and laborious disquisitions of those ingenious Whigs into the form of the Saxon government was nugatory, for this farther reason ; that the Saxon system, whatever it was, had been swallowed up by the Norman Conquest ; which established the *Feudal System* ; whereby the Con-

queror became the sovereign lord and king of the English people ; vested with unlimited power over every right or thing which they had acquired or possessed from *Fortune*, and also over every right which they possessed or held from *Nature*. And that power continued thus unlimited for two reigns. Henry the First, and Stephen, each bribed the barons to support them against competitors, by a charter, granting back, as a favour to these barons, the use and exercise of some few natural rights. But the people still remained villains ; the divided property of the king and barons. However, in the course of that long struggle between the tyrant John and the barons, the people had become of such consequence, as to be admitted by the barons, into a participation of the few natural rights, which were yielded back, in the charter extorted from that tyrant. And which charter is, on that account, called *Magna Charta*.

The great wealth acquired by the people, through commerce, during the reigns of Elizabeth and of the Stuarts, roused in them a spirit to contend with their sovereign lords the kings, for certain other natural rights. And these contests ended in what is termed the *Glorious Revolution*. On which occasion the people bargained with the new king, to relinquish these few contested rights ; and, in exchange, they unwarily granted him a power, the extent and consequences of which they little understood

understood or foresaw. They granted him a power to dip into their purse, by borrowing money on their credit.

This was the most advantageous bargain that ever a sovereign made with the people. For these sovereigns, having once obtained a power over the public purse, they found occasion to dip into it so often and so deep, by virtue of their prerogative to engage the nation at pleasure in war, that in process of time they have got the whole wealth of the nation into their power and management. And this power over the whole national wealth has established, by virtue of their own *gold*, a sovereign power over the people, that surpasses the sovereign power of the feudal system established by *steel* or *iron*, in a degree proportionably great, as the value of this first-mentioned metal exceeds that of the latter. For besides that this present power is inconceivably more extensive, it is perfectly secured from all those former disputes with barons and parliaments about natural rights. The mighty Lion now stalks majestic before, alone, and unopposed; his former troublesome opponents now sneaking after, as fawning jackalls, for their share of that common prey, the timid, helpless herd.

The term *King* is now become obsolete, and changed for a certain mystical term, *the Crown*. And the material Crown has become endowed with

with a talismanic power, to immediately transform the person who puts it on, in defiance of Nature, into a being super-human, possessing almost every attribute of the Deity.*

And thus we perceive that the Saxon system changed our generals into kings. The Norman system changed our king into our sovereign lord the king. And the Revolution system has changed our sovereign lord the king into a deity.

* Our King is *eternal* ; for he never dies. He is *infallible and all-wise* ; for he can do no wrong. He is the *fountain of justice* ; the *fountain of mercy* ; the *fountain of honour* ; we derive our lands and all our good things from him alone, &c. Whilst, in truth, his only real attribute approaching the Divinity, is that of irresistible power over the people of Great Britain ; acquired and maintained by their own gold. All these other divine attributes spring from the adulation of a people, who can despise and abhor the very same adulation paid by the Romans to their *Divus Tiberius* and *Divus Claudius*.

FINIS.



